THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

OPENED *AND* APPLYED:

Also Sundry *SERMONS* on Several other Subjects,

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Psal. 107. 43. *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.*

Rom. 11. 33. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out.*

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To the Reader :

Diſcourſes Concerning the DIVINE PROVIDENCE *are ever ſeaſonable, and may (if God ſhall ſo pleaſe) become Profitable. The preſent* Proſperity *of the* Wicked, *and the long Continued* Afflictions *of the* Righteous, *is that which (by reaſon of their own Blindneſs) proves an unhappy* ſtumbling block *to thoſe that periſh. But they who believe that there is* another *and an* Eternal World, *which all men do at Death enter into, ſee through this dark Objection, I remember* Jacobus de Vitriaco *hath a notable Relation with reſpect to this matter. It is mentioned by* Brawardine de Cauſa Dei *Page* 281. *And out of him by* Maccovius in Loc. Commun. *Cap.* 46. *Pag.* 407. *The ſumme of what he reports is to this Purpoſe.* There was (*ſaith he*) an *Hermite* who began to have Blaſphemous Imaginations as if the Providential diſpenſations of God in the world were not right, ſince Evil men live happily but Godly men are much afflicted. To this Hermite there

Comes an Angel in Humane ſhape, ſaying Follow me and thou ſhalt ſee the hidden Judgments of God: They goe together to the houſe of a man who kindly entertained them all the Night; The next Morning the Angel takes away a cup which their kind Hoſt did extreamly Love; and gave it to a wicked man, at whoſe Houſe they Lodged the next Night. The third Night they were moſt lovingly entertain'd at a very good mans houſe; Departing in the morning, the Angel meeting a ſervant of this man who had been ſo good to them, threw him from a Bridge into the water, and Drowned him. The fourth Night alſo, They Lodged at a good mans houſe and were Courteouſly uſed; but in the Night time the Angel Killed his Child. At theſe Things the Hermite was Offended, and would begone from ſuch a Companion; whereupon the Angel ſaith to him thou ſhalt now Underſtand the Secret Judgments of God: As for the firſt man that Entertained us, he did Inordinately affect that Cup, and therefore it was taken from him for his ſpiritual advantage, and given to the wicked man, as a preſent reward (*which is all he ſhall have*) for his kindneſs. As for the third, his ſervant did intend to kill his maſter, and therefore I killed him, and ſo

ſaved

ſaved the life of his Maſter, and the ſervant from being guilty of Murder, and he hath leſs puniſhment in Hell then he ſhould have had incaſe he had lived a while longer. As for the fourth, before he had a Child he was very Liberal, and did much good with his Eſtate; but when he ſaw he was like to have an heir, he with-held his hand and became Covetous, therefore his Child (whoſe ſoul is now in Paradiſe) was taken from him, becauſe it became an Occaſion of ſin unto him.

Thus far is that Relation; which (though ſome take it to be a real Hiſtory *) I look upon as a Parable: And it ſerves to ſhew that albeit the Judgments of God are* a great Deep, *and men do not for the preſent ſee the Reaſon of them, yet that they are (and ſhall at laſt appear to be)* Juſt, *and* Equal, *and* Good.

This ſubject of Divine Providence *has been largely and Elaborately handled by others: Not only by all* Divines *who have written* Common places: *but by ſeveral of our own Nation in their Diſcourſes lately publiſhed: In ſpecial by Mr.* Flavel, *Dr.* Collins, *Mr.* Charnock, *and Mr.* Crane. *Nevertheleſs, the Endeavours of others may (if God ſee meet to own them) be of uſe alſo, ſince as* Auſtin *ſpeaks,* Utile eſt plures libros, a pluribus fieri. *I have for the* Reader's *ſake deſigned* Brevity, *and thence have not tranſcribed*

for the Preſs all the Sermons *that were preached on* Ezek. 1. 26. *Leſt the diſcourſe ſhould become too Voluminous for* ſuch Readers whoſe Edification is peculiarly aimed at. *The Sermons on* Iſai. 38. 18. *were preached on Occaſion of my Recovery from* Sickneſs *this laſt Summer. If any be deſirous to ſee more on that Subject, they may read an excellent* Diſcourſe *of Mr.* Hookes *(who was ſometimes a Faithful and Eminent Teacher of the Church at* New-Haven *in* N. E.) *on the ſame Scripture. Some other Diſcourſes I had thought to have added, having bin much importuned thereunto, but I ſhall rather reſerve them for another opportunity (if God permit) than make this ſmall Book ſwell beyond its intended limits.*

I have Cauſed to be annexed herewith a Sermon *of my Brother's who ſucceds my (*now bleſſed*) Brother* Samuel *in the work of the* Miniſtry *in* Dublin, *as I (*ſed non paſſubus æquis*) do here in* Boſton *(for* that *Brother of mine was the firſt that taught the Word of the Lord in* this Congregation *to which at preſent I ſtand Related.) Concerning the Author I ſhall ſay nothing, conſidering my near Relation to him it is not proper, nor (through Grace) is it needful for me to ſpeak any thing: He is well known in* England *and in* Ireland *and he is in every reſpect as to me an* Elder Brother. *I hope the Publication of this Sermon of his, will tend to promote the Intereſt of Holineſs and* Cloſe walking with God, *in the hearts and lives*

of

of ſome (I truſt of many) that ſhall peruſe it: 'Twould have bin more Polite and perfect, had the Author himſelf emitted it: what is here publiſhed is done from the Notes which himſelf wrote without having the leaſt thought of its ever being Printed. At the requeſt of a Relation he ſent the Original without reſerving any Copy for his own uſe So did it come to my hands. Time was when this my Brother and myſelf had opportunities of ſpeaking together in the Name of the Lord to the ſame Congregations; but for theſe many years the Lord Jeſus hath fixed our Stations in the world and in his Church, at a remote diſtance each from other. If in this way of the Preſs we may Conjunctly glorify God and promote the ſalvation of any of his Elect, how ſhall we rejoyce when we meet one another in the day of Chriſt!

One that has bin ſo often brought back from the gates of the grave as I have, may well be ſollicitous Concerning the Improvement of his ſhort time. Thoughts of this nature have not been without ſome Impreſſion on my ſpirit, cauſing the more willingneſs to endeavour that whilſt I am living, I may bring forth ſome fruit that ſhall remain after I can neither ſpeak nor write any more for the glory of God, and good of the ſouls of men.

Increaſe Mather

Boſton N. E.
Octob. 25: 1684.

The God of Heaven has an over-ruling hand of Providence in whatever cometh to Paſs in this world.

Ezek. 1. 26.

And above the firmament that was over their heads, was the likeneſs of a Throne as the appearance of a Sapphire ſtone, and upon the likeneſs of the Throne, was the likeneſs as the appearance of a man above upon it.

IN this chapter we have the Prophet *Ezekiel* his viſion concerning a wonderful *wheel*; whereby we are to underſtand the wheel of Providence. The changeable ſcene of affairs in this lower world, is fitly ſet forth by a ſimilitude of that nature. This verſe (with thoſe following) containes the laſt part of his viſion where in he declares that he ſaw a very glorious throne; which is here deſcribed from three things.

1. The Place where it was. *above the firmament which was over their heads.* He had before ſaid, that he ſaw living Creatures moving wheels;

ſignifying the holy Angels who are made uſe of in manageing and carrying on the affairs of Providence in this world, *over their heads appeared a great Heaven*, Now the Throne here ſpoken of was above this Heaven.

2. It is deſcribed from that which it did appeare like unto, viz. *a Sapphire ſtone*, which is amongſt the moſt precious of Gemms. It is of an Heaven-like Cerulean colour. And hence is an Embleme of *Liberty* Power and Glory. When the children of Iſrael were delivered from their Bondage and going into a glorious Land, the ſeventy Elders had a viſion not unlike unto this; for *they ſaw the God of Iſraël and there was under his feet, as it were a paved worke of Sapphire ſtones and the body of Heaven in its clearneſs, Exod.* 24. 10

3. This Throne is deſcribed from the perſon ſitting in it. *There was the appearance of a man above upon it.* By which Chriſt is meant; who did frequently appear in viſions to the holy Patriarchs and Prophets as a man, to ſignfie his future Incarnation. And he was ſeen by *Ezekiel* as a man upon a Throne, to intimate that this Power and glory doth belong to the ſon of God, not only as God but as Man; as God-man or Mediator. There are three doctrines which this ſcripture doth preſent to our conſiderations.

Doct. I. *That He who ſitteth in Heaven has an over ruling hand of Providence in whatever commeth to Paſs in this world.*

Doct.

Doct. II *That the Throne of Christ is a glorious throne.*
Doct. III. *That the Man Christ Jesus hath a Providential kingdome appertaining to him, or*
That the affairs of providence are in the hands of Christ not only as God but as Mediator.

At present only to the first of these doctrines namely, *That He who sits in Heaven has an over ruling hand of Providenee in what ever commeth to Pass in this world.*

In the doctrinal handling of this truth we shall 1. Lay down some propositions for Explication 2. Mention some things which are Evidences and Demonstrations of the truth before us, *viz.* That there is an over ruling hand of providence in what cometh to pass in the world.

Propos. I. *The Lord in Heaven knows all that is done upon the Earth.* He knows all things long before their accomplishment. Therefore *James* said *Knowne unto God are all his works from the begining of the world. Act.* 15. 18. yea from all 5
Eternity. The very thoughts of Men which are known to none but themselvs, the Lord knows them before they themselves doe, *Ezek.* 38. 10, 11. for which cause He is said to *understand their thoughts afar off. Psal.* 139, 2. i. e. long before they came into their minds: Hence, as to many events of providence, God has declared long before hand that so it should be *Isai.* 46. 10. and 48, 3. The great Events of providence wherein the Church has been concerned, the

The Lord has ſeen good to make them known before they came to paſs, that ſo his people might be prepared for them. He hath ſomtimes told his people before hand, not only what Afflictions and perſecutions ſhould befal them, but how long they ſhould continue. *He ſaid to Abraham know of a ſurety thy ſeed ſhall be a ſtranger in a land that is not theirs, and they ſhall afflict them four hundred years.* *Geneſ.* 15, 13. Though the children of Iſrael continued in the land of Egypt, not much above two hundred years, yet from the time that thoſe words were ſpoken to *Abraham* it was four hundred years e're they were delivered out of Egypt. The Lord alſo fore-told that the Church ſhould be in Babylon ſeventy years. *Jer.* 29, 19. So concerning *Antiochus* his perſecution, it was to laſt *two thouſand and three hundred mornings and evenings* *Dan.* 8, 14. which amounts to ſix years three moneths and eighteen dayes. And in the book of *Revelations* the Lord Chriſt has prædicted the great changes which ſhould happen in that part of the world, which is the principal ſeat where the Church is diſperſed; even unto his *ſecond coming.* In the *Revelations* there is a *ſeal-propheey*, which does fore-tel what ſhould befal the *Roman world*, and by what judgements it ſhould be brought to ruin; and there is a *Book-prophecie*, wherein the ſtate of the Church under the Reign of Antichriſt is predicted. yet more, ſometimes

God

God has ſpoken of Particular perſons long before they came into the world, mentioning what their names ſhould be, and what things they ſhould doe; that ſo men might ſee that the Lord kuows not only the general concerns which ſhall happen in the world, but alſo particular perſons, and particular events of this or that kind. Thus wee read in 1. *King.* 13, 2. that a prophet cried againſt *Jeroboam's* Altar in the word of the Lord, and ſaid, O *Altar altar, thus ſayth the Lord, behold a child ſhall be born to the houſe of David, Joſiah by name, and upon thee ſhall he offer the prieſts of the high places that burn incenſe upon thee, and mens bones ſhall be burnt upon thee.* Juſt ſo it afterwards came to paſs, yet that was ſpoken three hundred years before *Joſiah* was born. Again, the Lord by the prophet *Iſaiah ch.* 44, *ver.*28. *ſaith of* Cyrus, *He is my ſhepherd, and ſhall perform all my pleaſure, even ſaying to Jeruſalem, Thou ſhalt be built; and to the Temple, Thy foundation ſhall be laid.* which accordingly came to paſs; but this Prophecy was uttered two hundred years before *Cyrus* was born.

And if he that ſits upon the throne knows what ſhal be done in the world before it comes to paſs, he muſt needs know of it, when it is done or in doing: ſee therefore what is ſpoken in the 22. *ver.* of the firſt *chap.* of *Ezekiel* where it is ſaid that *the likeneſs of the firmament upon the heads of the living creatures was as the colour of Chryſtal ſtretched*

over their heads above. And why is the firmament ſaid to be of Chryſtal, but to ſignifie that he that ſits upon the throne ſees clearly all that is tranſacted here below. Hence alſo in the firſt chapter of *Zach.* Chriſt ſpeaking to the prophet concerning his holy Angels, ſayth *Theſe are they whom the Lord hath ſent to walk to and fro through the earth; and they anſwered the angel of the Lord* (i. e. Chriſt) *and ſaid, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold, all the earth ſitteth ſtill, and is at reſt.* As a King that has his Intelligencers abroad here and there, and ſo knows what's done; thus the King of Heaven expreſſeth himſelfe after the manner of men, to ſhew that He has a perfect underſtanding of all affairs and tranſactions upon the earth. Moreover the Lord is every where preſent. Tho' his throne is ſaid to be above the firmament, becauſe He doth manifeſt his glory there eſpecially; Nevertheleſs he is in all Places, and that not only in reſpect of his Power, as a King is preſent in all places of his dominion, but in reſpect of his Being. *Jer.* 23, 24. *do not I fill heaven and earth ſayth the Lord.* Therefore he muſt needs be acquainted with all things that come to paſs in the world.

Propoſ. 2. *There is an holy Decree and Predetermination in Heaven concerning all things which come to paſs in the world.* He worketh all things after the counſel of his will. *Epheſ.* 1, 11.

And

And indeed the Foreknowledge of God proveth his decree, For if he knows what shall be, he must needs either *will* or *nill* the Being of it. To say that God foreseeth that such and such things will be, but that they come to pass contrary to his decree or whether he will or no, is to make Omnipotency impotent. Hence whatever things happen in the world, could not but be so, that is in respect of the divine decree, tho' as to second causes they might have been otherwise, yet as to the first cause things are infallibly accomplished, as he that is in Heaven has determined, *Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsil shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. Isa.* 46, 10. He is of one mind who can turn him? and what his soul desireth even that he doeth. The decrees of Heaven are in respect of firmness and immutability compared to *mountains of brass. Zech.* 6, 1. Hence it is that many things come to pass in the world which in the judgement of men, could never have been. A special scope of *Ezekiel*'s vision in the Context, is to intimate that the God of Heaven would over rule the affairs of the earth so, as that Jerusalem should be taken and destroyed. Yet this was a thing in the judgement of Men very unlikely to be accomplished *Lam.* 4, 12. And if the Holy God, had not decreed and accordingly brought about such an overturn-

overturning, it would never have been. Notwithſtanding the deſigns of the King of Babylon, *who is he that ſaith and it cometh to paſs, when the Lord commanded it not.* *Lam.* 3, 37. Men often times take up Purpoſes and reſolutions and all comes to nothing in the concluſion, becauſe the moſt High had appointed otherwiſe. Once when there was a deſign and a decree amongſt ſome potent perſons in the world, which if it had taken effect, would have proved ſubverſive to the Intereſt of Religion, *Luther* comforted himſelfe with that conſideration, *Aliter ſtatutum eſt in Cœlo*, There is another decree in heaven, and the purpoſes of men ſhall never take place when they are againſt that. who would have thought that the advice of *Huſhai* ſhould have bin harkened to, rather than that of ſuch an Oracle *of ſtate* as *Achitophel*, whoſe Counſel if it had been followed, Abſolom had prevailed and David had periſhed; but ſee the reaſon why it was not ſo, 2. *Sam.* 17, 14. *For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good* (it was politicaly good though morally evil) *counſel of Achitophel to the intent that he might bring evil upon Abſolom.*

To make things depend chiefly upon the decrees and wills of man, is to place Man in the Throne and to dethrone him that ſitteth in Heaven. We muſt therefore know, that all Events of Providence are the iſſues and executions of an Ancient, Eternal, Unchangeable decree of Heaven.

When

When a ravenous bird came from the eaſt, it was the Lord that called him in order to executeing His counſil. *Yea I have ſpoken it and I will bring it to paſs, I have purpoſed it, and I will alſo doe it Iſa.* 46. 11

Propoſ. 3. *The Providence of Heaven as to the extent and Object of it, is univerſal.* Pſa. 103, 19. *The Lord hath prepared his throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.*

1. It is extended unto all places of the world. There is a Providence at work in every corner of the earth. Hence *Ezekiel's foure wheels which had one likneſs, chap.* 1, *ver.* 16. To note that there is a wheel of divine providence going in every part of the world. There are as many wheels as there are quarters of the world. There is a wheel for the North and a wheel for the South, a wheel for the Eaſt and a wheel for the Weſt. A wheel for *Aſia*, and a wheel for *Africa*; a wheel for *Europe*, and a wheel for *America* too.

2. The providence of God is extended unto all Creatures. For it is the Lord that preſerveth them all. *Heb.* 1, 3. *Upholding all things by the word of his power.* h. e. by the powerful word of his providence. Divine preſervation is one thing in providence. And the providence of God is to be admired in that all the ſeveral *ſpecies* or kinds of creatures which were made at the firſt Creation are ſtill kept in Being. There are many creatures which haveing an Antipathy in their natures ſeek the deſtruction of each other;

other; and there are many *Individuals* that are destroyed every day; yet that sort of creature is kept living in the world ever since the Creation to this day. And God provides for all his creatures. He is the great householder by whose care and bounty all creatures in the world are susteined. *Psal.* 104. 27, 28. *These wait all upon thee, that thou mayst give them their meat in due season; that thou givest them they gather; thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.* When the Apostle sayth *doth God take care of oxen?* his meaning is not as tho such creatures were not under the providence of God, only that the Lord in appointing a Ceremonial precept concerning them, had a greater respect unto Men. Yea God taketh care of those creatures whom of all other, one would think he should not regard or in any way provide for. *Job.* 38, 41. *who provideth for the Raven his food, when his young ones cry unto God.* Young creatures can't help themselvs, but 'tis natural for them to cry; and the divne providence finds a supply for them. Writers say concerning the Raven, that there is an unnatural *storge* in that bird, so that it does not pitty its own young ones; Whence the miracle of *Elijahs* being fed by a Raven was the more illustrious; since it was by a creature which will not feed so much as her own young; but then their necessities cry unto God for a supply, and hee provideth for them.

Thirdly.

3. As to all events which come to pass in the world, he that sitteth upon the Throne hath an hand therein. There is nothing cometh to pass without a providence. Those things which as to men are the most Contingent and fortuitous, the Lord has an over ruling hand of providence therein, What more Fortuitous or that has a greater and more uncertain chance in it, than a *lot* has. yet *the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord Prov.* 16, 33. So if a man happen to kill another by meer Accident, it may be he is cutting wood, and the head of his ax flies off and kills his neighbour, the providence of God has for holy ends ordered that sad casualty. *Deut.* 19, 5. *Exod.* 21, 13. Yea,

4. The providence of God is extended to the least and most inconsiderable things that happen in the world. Heathen Philosophers acknowledged that the God of heaven has an over ruleing providence in the great affairs and concernments of this lower world, but not in lesser matters. They could say, *Non vacat exiguis rebus adesse Jovi,* the great God had something else to doe than to mind little matters, but they knew not the Lord aright; He would not be God if the least thing in the world should happen without him. The scripture teacheth us to Believe that the least as well as the greatest matters are ordered by him whose understanding is Infinite. His wisdom does extend to fowles of the Air, and

to

to the graſs of the field. *Mat.* 6, 26, 39. To the ſparrows, and to every ſingle ſparrow; not one of them is kill'd without the ordering hand of the divine providence. Yea, it reacheth to the very hairs upon the heads of men. *Mat.* 10. 29, 30. which ſheweth that there is not the leaſt thing happening in the world, without the knowledge and providence of the moſt High.

Propoſ. IV. *There are ſome events of providence in which there is a ſpecial hand of Heaven ordering of them.*

There are *Magnalia Dei*, things wherein the glorious finger of God is eminently to be ſeen: e. g. 1. There are eminent preſervations and deliverances, which every one may ſee the Name of God written upon them in plain legible characters. *David* experienced many deliverances of providence, which he could not but take deep notice of the hand of God therein. 2. *Sam.* 22, 1. What a ſtrang thing was it to conſider, that though his life was ſought after by ſo many, and there were but few in the world that either did or durſt ſhew reſpect to him, yet that he ſhould eſcape with his life. Sometimes the whole world is ſet to deſtroy one Poor man, but they cannot effect it. There was *unus Athanaſius contra totum mundum*, one Faithful *Athanaſius* that Emperours and all the world with them were reſolved to be his death, and yet they could never accompliſh it, becauſe a ſpecial providence

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of God was ingaged for him. Chriſt is repreſented as *having the ſeven ſtars. Rev.* 3, 1. He holds them and upholds them in his right hand, as long as he hath any worke for them to doe. Mr. *Brightman* applies that ſcripture unto *Luther*, and indeed there was a mighty providence in preſerving that mans Life for ſo long a time. As one ſpeaketh, that a poor Frier (for ſo *Luther* had bin before his converſion) ſhould ſet himſelf to oppoſe the Pope and all his Cardinals was a ſtrange thing, that he ſhould prevail in his oppoſition was a ſtranger, but that he ſhould live to be ſixty three years of age, and at laſt die quietly in his Bed, was the greateſt miracle of all the reſt. but the hand of him *that hath the ſeven ſtars* delivered him. And ſometimes men are brought to the graves mouth, that all hope of life is gone, and yet they are delivered. As it was in that ſtorm at ſea, wherein the Apoſtle *Paul* (and the whole ſhips company for his ſake) had ſuch an eminent deliverance. *Act.* 27, 20 *all hope that we ſhould be ſaved was then taken away.* Again he ſayes in 2. *Cor.* 1. 8, 9. *we were preſſed out of meaſure, inſomuch that we deſpaired even of life, but we had the ſentence of death in our ſelves, that we ſhould truſt in God that raiſeth the dead, who delivered us from ſo great a death.* Now there is a ſpecial hand of providence in ordering ſuch deliverances. 2. And the like is to be ſaid concerning eminent Judgements which befal men

in

in this world. A Judgement is sometimes eminent in respect of the circumstances of it as when it overtakes men in the very act of sin, as it was with *Nadab* & *Abihu* & *Corahs* crew, and several others mentioned in the scripture, whom judgement and death found in the very act of wickedness. or when the Judgement is suited to the nature of the sin, so as one may in the punishment see plainly what the evil is that God is provoked to anger by, there is a singular hand of providence in such dispensations. Likewise judgements are eminent in respect of the greatness and terribleness of them, when they are such as strike a dread and amazement in those that hear of them. As *the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, that both the ears of every one that heareth it, shall tingle. In that day, I will perform against Eli, all things which I have spoken concerning his house.* 1. *Sam.* 3. 11, 12. That threatening was terribly fulfilled a long time after in the days of *Saul* when bloody *Doeg the Edomite fell upon the Priests and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did weare a linen Ephod and Nob the city of the priests smote he with the edge of the sword both men and women, children and sucklings.* When the news of this astonishing judgement went abroad, it made the ears of those that heard of it to glowe & tingle. And such judgements did He who sitteth upon the throne bring upon the Jewish Nation, when Ierusalem was destroyed, and the delicate citizens became slaves to the worst of the Heathen.

It was ſuch an awful diſpenſation as the like had never been. *Jer.* 30, 7. *Alas, for that day is great, ſo that none, is like it.* When the King was taken priſoner, his children all ſlain before his eyes, and then his eyes put out, he and his nobles laid in chains and ſo carried away captives into a far countrey, the walls of Jeruſalem laid even with the ground, the Temple burnt down; that was a great day indeed and none like unto it. Well might *Ezekiel* in this *viſion* concerning the wheel, ſee and ſay as in *ver.* 18. *As for the rings they were ſo high that they were dreadful.* Sometimes the revolutions of Providence are high & dreadful. There is an high ſtrain of Judgement. 3. When there are (and ſtupendous judgements make way for that) amazeing changes either as to the world in general, or as to particular Nations and Countreys, he that ſitteth in Heaven upon the throne hath a ſpecial hand in thoſe great alterations of the ſtate of affairs. The world might ſee that *the heavens do rule*, when *Nebuchadnezer* the Emperour of the world was put down from his throne. *Dan.* 4. 26. When the ſcene of affairs in a whole Kingdome is turned quite upſide down, there's a ſpecial hand of Heaven in bringing about ſuch changes. So it was with the Jewiſh Nation. The Lord therfore ſayd, *I will wipe Jeruſalem as a man wipeth a diſh, wiping it, and turning it upſide downe.* 2. *King.* 21, 13. When a diſh is wiped

wiped that part which was uppermoſt is turned down, and that which was lowermoſt becomes uppermoſt. So was it with *Jeruſalem* and the Land of *Judah*, the great men were ſlaves, only the poor of the Land had liberty. And oft-times ſuch overturnings happen in the Earth. Hence the *world* is by *Ezekiel* compared to a *wheel*, viz. in regard of the Changes and viciſſitudes which are amongſt things here below. The memorable paſſage of *Seſoſtris* (an Egyptian Tyrant) is frequently made uſe of to this purpoſe, who having ſubdued four Kings, he made them to draw his chariot; one of them fixing his eye earneſtly upon the chariot wheel, the Conquerour demands the reaſon of his ſo doing; to whom he replied, methinks I ſee in this wheel an Embleme of the affairs of the world; for that part of the wheel which is now on the ground is by and by lifted up to Heaven, and that which is uppermoſt is anon the Lowermoſt of all. We ſee many times, that that Intereſt which was high a while ago is brought down, that things change like a wheel. One while *Babylon* is riſing, and *Jeruſalem* is falling. So it was when *Ezekiel* had this viſion. Again, God changeth the ſcene of affairs the other way, that *Jeruſalem* riſeth, and *Babylon* cometh down to the ground. When wicked men are in power, the vileſt on the earth are exalted, but then God ſends *a wiſe King, and he ſcattereth the wicked and*

bringeth

bringeth the wheel over them, *Prov.* 20, 26. There is a mighty providence of God in turning the wheel about after such a strange and amazeing manner. *Ezek.* 17. 24. *All the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, I the Lord have spoken, and have done it.* Such providences make a great noise in the world, like the ratling of a wheel which is heard afar off. When Jerusalem was taken it made a great noise in the world, and much more did the taking of Babylon do so. The turning of that great wheel made a noyse that was heard all the world over, *Jer.* 50, 46. *At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations.* Wherefore there is a special hand of God in ordering such great commotions and changes in the earth; and most of all when they are brought about suddenly and unexpectedly. *Adonijah* was heir apparent to the Crown, and and the great ones of the Land, & a multitude of the worser sort of people fell in with him, but all on sudden the Kingdom fell into another hand; How so? *Adonijah* himselfe could not but confess that it was the Lords doing. He said therefore to *Bathsheba* 1. *King.* 2, 15. *thou knowest that the Kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about and is become my brothers: for it was his from the Lord.*

The time is near at hand when mystical *Babylon* i. e. *Rome* shall be utterly destroyed. And when this great work shall be accomplished, it will be done all on a sudden, *for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her, Rev.* 18, 8. There is then a great hand of Heaven in such mighty events.

Propos. V. *He that sitteth upon the Throne will over rule all things that are done in the world, so as shall be to his own praise and glory,*

God ayms at his owne glory as in the works of Creation so of Providence, *Prov.* 16, 4. Not only divine Preservation but *Gubernation* belongs to Providence, *h. e.* Gods governing the world and all the affairs of it, so as shall issue in his own praise. Yea even those things which seem to eclipse and darken the glory of God, he will by his Power and wisdom so over rule and order matters, as that they shall occasion eternal glory to his everlasting Name. The sins of men do in there own nature tend to the dishonour of God, yet he knows how to make the greatest sins become an occasion of honour to his Name forever. When *Joseph*'s brethern sold him into Egypt they sinned exceedingly, yet the only wise God over ruled matters so, that that very sin of theirs was an occasion of all *Jacobs* Family (and so of the whole Church of God) being preserved from destruction, as we see in *Gen.* 45, 7. and 59, 20. Whenever any man shall doe, or designe evil against the Lords people, they are guilty of gr[illegible]

Great iniquity, yet God over rules all so as that those very designes shall issue in his own praise and glory, whether men will or no. *Psal.* 76, 10. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee. the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.* The Lord preserves his people in the middest of those devouring deaths and dangers that may surround them; and delivers them at last, upon which account they praise and glorifie his name; so that the evil designs of adversarys occasion those praises to the Lord, which otherwise would never have been. 2. *Chron.* 20, 26. There are divine attributes which the sins of men do occasion the glory thereof to be discovered. *e. g.* His glorious Patience. There are some that commit very horrid sins, and yet God does not strike them dead and send them to Hell immediately, whereby it appears that he is a God of infinite Patience. Yea, there is so much sin committed in the earth every day, as that if God should put the government of the world into the hands of a meer creature tho' endued with all the Patience of all men and Angels, he could not bear with such Indignities, but would certainly set the world on fire the next hour. Hence then the patience of God appears to be Infinite, and so glory cometh to his Great and blessed Name. Also, by occasion of the sins of men, the Justice of God is glorified. For if men sin God will punish, and that is for the honour of Justice;

therefore the Lord sayd, *I will be honoured upon Pharaoh and upon all his host. Exod.* 14. 4. In this respect only is God said to take pleasure in the punishment and eternal ruin of damned creatures; not as it is their misery, so he taketh no delight in their death, but as thereby his Justice is glorified; so does he *Cause his fury to rest upon them and is comforted Ezek.* 5, 13. And as for the elect of God, the glory of divine grace is discovered in Pardoning their sins and saving their souls, all their provocations notwithstanding. *Rom.* 9, 23. *that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy*. God calls his grace his glory, because in that Attribute his glory doth most eminently appear. Moreover he that sitteth upon the throne does sometimes by a wondrous and amazing providence make sin to be an occasion of conversion from sin; that an elect vessel is left to fall into some great sin, by occasion whereof Conscience is awakened to repent not only of that, but of all other sins. Yea, (which is wonderful to consider) the greatest sin that ever was committed in the world, has through the over ruling providence of God, been an occasion of the Highest glory to the Name of God; I Mean the sin of the Jews in crucifying the Son of God, which was the greatest wickedness that the sun ever saw; Nevertheless, by means of Christ being crucified, all whom he died for are saved, whereby more glory commeth

to the Name of God, than by all other things whatsoever. But the truth of this proposition will appear more fully to the admiration of saints and the astonishment of sinners at the great day, which is called a *day of Revelation Rom.* 2. 5. For then the deep mysteries not only of Redemption but of Providence, will be revealed and lay'd open before the world,

Quest. *But how doth it appear that there is a* Providence *in what cometh to pass in the world?*

Answ. Several things may here be mentioned which are Evidences and *Demonstrations* of this Truth.

1. *Inasmuch as the world stands that's a sufficient Demonstration that there is a Providence.*

For as the world could not give it self a Being at first, so neither can it continue it self in Being. If the same hand which made all creatures should not preserve them, they would all presently return to their first nothing. *Heb.* 1, 3. Now that is *Providence.* Creation giveth *Primo esse*, but Providence giveth *Porro esse*, as the schools express it. The frame of nature would be dissolved the next moment, if there were not an hand of Providence to uphold and govern all. To preserve and govern the world is too high a work for any meer creature to undertake. Inasmuch then, as all creatures are preserved and kept in their order, it is because he that sitteth in Heaven ruleth over all. A Wheel must have

an Hand to guide it or it will presently Turn out of the way and fall to the ground; so if there were not a divine hand to manage the Wheel of Providence, all things would run into confusion, and the World would come to ruin in one day.

3. *Things many times come to pass contrary to humane probabilities and the rational Conjectures and expectations of men.* The true Reason of which, is, because he that sitteth on the throne over rules all. *Eccles.* 9, 11. *The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong, --- but time and chance happens to all.* One would think that the swiftest runner should come to the end of the race soonest; but sometimes it happens otherwise. Some unexpected Accident or other Chaunceth to fall in the way, whereby the slow runner comes to the end of his race before the swift. Now it is the providence of God that orders such an Accident to fall out at such a Time. Men would conjecture that the battle should be to the strong; that when armies ingage they that have the greatest numbers, and the ablest and most couragious souldiers should surely win the Day, but sometimes it is not so, *Psal.* 33, 16, 17, 2. *Chron.* 13. 3, 16, 17. When the Syrians came against the Children of Israel in Ahabs time, any man would have concluded that they should go away victorious, both in that they had incomparably the greater army,

Army, and in that Ahab was a most wicked Prince that ever had reigned over the ten Tribes, so that if men turned their eyes either to Heaven or Earth, and judged by what seemed most probable, they would bett on the Syrians side; yet did they receive a fatal overthrow. 1. *Kin.* 20. 27, 39, 30. He that sitteth on the throne saw and considered that if the Syrians should prevaile his Name would be blasphemed, therefore he over ruled the chance of war, so as that the battle fell on the Israelites side. When to issue the controversie between two Armies, little *David* and great *Goliah* were to ingage in a duel, in all probability *Goliah* must be the victor. *Goliah* a Giant and *David* but a youth. *Goliah* armed *Cap a pe*, *David* had nothing to *offend* so mighty a Champion with, or to *defend* himself, but only a stone and sling; and if he should happen to strike *Goliah* and not smite him just in the forehead, all the stones he could sling at him could not hurt him. How then came it to pass that the stone hit him just in that place, so as to sink into his forehead. Certainly it was from God, whose over ruling providence bringeth things to pass, beyond the expectations of men.

3. *Things act sometimes otherwise than according to their natures and proper inclinations, which is a clear demonstration that they are over ruled by a divine hand.* thus it has been sometimes as to na-

Natural Agents. The Lion hath been kept from devouring. The fire hath not consumed those that have been put into it, as we read concerning the three Worthies in the 3. *ch.* of *Daniel*. And the Martyr Books tells us of some of our own country-men who when they were burnt to death for bearing witness to the truth against Popery, professed that they felt no pain. One of the Martyrs when barbarous and bloody Papists were kindling a fire about him said, *Me thinks you strew roses at my feet.* Another sayd, *I feel no more paine in the midst of these flames, than if I were lying upon a bed of Downe.* Sometimes things that are alwaies in motion have, contrary to their nature, been made to stand still. So did the River Jordan, and the Red sea; So did the sun in *Hezekiah*'s time; a thing which was wondred at all the world over: and thence the King of Babylon sent to Jerusalem to enquire about that wonder: doubtless because the Astronomers in Chaldea observed and were amazed at that providence. And the Sun was once eclipsed at the time of the Full moon; *viz.* when our Saviour Christ was in his passion; which according to the ordinary course of nature could not be. Such things would never happen if there were not a God in Heaven who over rules all creatures at his pleasure. And as for *moral Agents*, they do not sometimes act according to their natural inclinations. It is

said

ſaid *Prov.* 28, 23. *He that rebuketh a man afterwards finds more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.* They that rebuke irritate, it is therefore from the over ruling providence of God when ſuch find favour. There is nothing more natural, then for wicked men to ſeek to deſtroy thoſe that are good; it is as natural to them as 'tis for fiſhes in the ſea to devour one another *Habak.* 1. 13, 14. Yet they have ſometimes ſhewed the Lords ſervants, who have Providentially fallen into their hands, very great kindneſs. *Act.* 28. 2, 10. *Jer.* 29. 11. When *Melancton* and other proteſtant Miniſters, were taken and brought before the Emperour, every one thought that he would put them to death; but God over rul'd his heart ſo as that he uſed them with great Courteſy. Sometimes when evil minded men have come out with a deſign to ſurpriſe and do hurt to the Lords ſervants, God has ſo over rul'd their hearts, as that they have done good to them, and ſpoken well of them. This we ſee in *Laban* and *Eſau* who once had in their hearts to do evil to Jacob, but their minds were ſuddenly changed. And the Officers which were ſent to apprehend Chriſt, returned to the phariſees who ſet them awork, ſaying, *never man ſpake like this man.* So that God over-rules the ſpirits of men, and turns them which way ſoever he pleaſeth.

4. *The rewards both of Mercy and Judgement.*

which

which the Lord many times dispenseth towards the children of men, are an evidence that there is a Providence. Mat. 7, 2. When men have done good, the providence of God so orders things in the world, as that they shall receive good; and the good which they receive holds some proportion with that which they have done. When *David* was set upon building an house for God, the Lord sayd to him *I will make thee an house.* 2. *Sam.* 7, 11. When *Ebedmelek* saved the prophet Jeremiah's life, divine providence preserved his life in a time of common danger when many others perished. And we read concerning *Ahikem* that he was kind to the prophet *Jer.* 26, 24. And his Son *Gedeliah* found great favour with the Babylonians, so was the kindness which he shewed to the prophet returned upon him in his son. And evil deeds are oftentimes rewarded, and sinners met with in their kind, They are payd in their own Coyne. *Haman* did eat the fruit of the tree which himself had planted, when he was hanged upon the Gallows which he had built for *Mordecai.* Both the Scripture and ecclesiastical story abound with examples of this nature; But of this we shall have occasion (if God permit) further to inlarge from another scripture.

5. *Many things come to pass at such a nick of Time, as that 'tis from thence evident that there is an hand of Heaven over ruling all.*

Sometimes

Sometimes an eminent mercy cometh, just as there has been much praying to the God of heaven about the matter. *Act.* 12, 5. There were several days of fasting and prayer kept by *Mordecai* and *Ester* and many other Saints and just then was *Haman*'s plot discovered and defeated *Ester.* 4, 16. When the prophet *Isaiah* and *Hezekiah* had been praying against Senacherib, the Angel slew an hundred eighty and five thousand of the Assyrians. And many times the Lords people are delivered out of their Fears and dangers at such a season as does clearly manifest that the hand of Heaven hath done it. If salvation should not come just at that time, their enemies would swallow them up. 2. *Sam.* 33, 27. *Est.* 6, 1. *Gen.* 22. 10, 11. In the mount the Lord is seen. By these things then it is manifest that there is a providence.

But some one will say, *Do not wicked men prosper in the world? They commit great sins and yet go unpunished, how then is there a Providence.* This very objection has occasion'd some to turn Atheists. As *Diagoras* an Athenian Philosopher, hearing a perjur'd man imprecate himself, and yet observing that no judgement did immediatly follow, he thereupon desperately and foolishly concluded that there was no God in Heaven, because the imprecated vengeance did not presently fall upon such an Heaven-daring sinner. But there may be and is a providence all this not-

withstanding

notwithſtanding; as is manifeſt if wee conſider

1. That wicked men do not always go unpuniſhed in this world. Sometimes they do, that ſo men may ſee and conclude that there is a judgement to come, *a day of wrath* which the wicked are reſerved for. *Job.* 21. 30. But ſinners do not always eſcape in this world, that ſo men might ſee that there is a providence as well as a judgement to come *Job.* 31. 3. Eſpecialy ſuch as have bin the firſt in any ſin, providence is wont to ſet a mark of divine diſpleaſure upon them, that others might be afraid to do as they have done; as we ſee in *Cain* who was the firſt Murderer; and in *Nadab* and *Abihu*, who were the firſt that offer'd ſtrange fire; in *Corah* who was the firſt that made a ſchiſme in the Church of Iſrael; in *Ananias* and *Sapphira* who were the firſt that became guilty of Sacriledge amongſt Chriſtians. There are Volumns publiſhed to the world, which do abundantly confirm the Truth of this.

2. Wicked men notwithſtanding their Proſperity are miſerable. For they ſhall not be in their proſperous eſtate long. *Job.* 20, 5. *the triumphing of the wicked is ſhort, and the joy of the Hypocrite but for a moment.* He that ſitteth above the throne over ruleth things ſo as that when they are in their greateſt proſperity, and moſt likely to continue ſo, all on a ſudden their ſtate

is

is changed and their light is put out in obſcure darkneſs. They are *ſet in ſlippery places* as the Pſalmiſt's expreſſion is *Pſal.* 73, 18. Like as a man that ſtands upon the Ice, his feet ſuddenly ſlip, and down he comes, and it may be his bones are broken by the fall. Yea, and the proſperity of the wicked maketh way for their ruin, *Pſal.* 92. 7. *Prov.* 1. 32. And that's the thing, which he that ſitteth on the throne aymes at, in permitting the proſperity and exaltation of thoſe that are his worſt enemies; it is that ſo they may have the greater downfal at laſt, and that the Power and juſtice of God in puniſhing them, may be the more glorious and illuſtrious. Therefore, the Lord ſaid to Pharaoh, *In very deed for this cauſe have I reiſed thee up, for to ſhew in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout the earth. Exod.* 9. 16. So that the preſent proſperity of the wicked, will make them the more miſerable at the laſt. They will have the more ſin to anſwer for before him that ſitteth upon the throne forever. Yea, this very thought will add to their miſery, that once they were in proſperity; as it was a ſtinging aggravation of *Dives* his ſorrows, *remember that in thy life time thou hadſt thy good things.* So that this objection notwithſtanding, there may be and there is a *Providence.*

USE. I. *Hence ſee the reaſon why little inconſiderable things do occaſion great matters to be brought*

to pass amongst men in the world. It is because he that sits upon the throne doth wonderfully over rule all. He maketh little matters like the small wheel of a clock which sets all the rest a going or like the hinges of a great gate upon which all turns. Great Revolutions in the world, have have been occasioned by meer contingencies. When Nebuchadnezzar came with his army against Jerusalem, and sacked the city, and overturned the whole Jewish nation, it was a great Revolution; and yet a meer Contingency turned the scale with him, causing him to resolve that his Army should go to that city, when he was thinking to have gone first to another place. Why! He that sitts in Heaven ordered those casual Circumstances which put the King upon this fatal Resolve. When Nebuchadnezzar stood at the parting way, being at a loss whether to March against *Rabbath* of the *Ammonites*, or against *Jerusalem*, he used Divinations according to the Heathenish superstitions of those times; and God over ruled the divination, so as that the right hand way which led to Jerusalem was taken. So that a small casualty made way for the overthrow of a whole nation at once. *Ezek.* 21. 20, 21, 22. Sometimes one rash inconsiderate word, has caused a great Commotion and change of affairs in the world, as we see in that instance of *Ishbosheth* who inconsiderately reflected upon *Abner* for that which probably was

too true, but *Abner*'s proud spirit could not bear the reflection; so that in a heat hee forsakes *Ishbosheth* and brings about all the people with him. Nay a Dream has occasioned great matters. *Joseph*'s great afflictions were occasioned by Dreams; so was his advancement to be Lord over all the Land of Egypt, When *Daniel* was made ruler over the whole Province of Babylon, and the Chief Governour over all the wise men, the church of God fared the better on that account, yet this was brought to pass by means of a dream.

Again, the conversion of a sinner is a mighty work, yet it has sometimes bin occasioned by very unlikely means. It is noted in the Life of *Vergerius*, that the Pope (whose Legate he was) did without any cause suspect him to be a favourer of *Lutheranisme*, He to vindicate himself, resolved to write a book with that title *de Apostasia Germanorum*, and thereupon also took *Calvin's Institutions* into his hands, with a design of Confutation, but by reading that book which he thought to refute, he was himself converted, and became an eminent preacher of the Gospel. Sometimes God has made a very accidental thing an occasion of conversion. Once when *Austin* was preaching the things which he intended to deliver went out of his mind, so that he diverted into a discourse shewing the great error and evil which the *Manichees* were guilty of,

of, and *Firmus* a *Manichee* was converted by that Sermon. I knew a Minister, that as he was travelling missed his way, and so happened to come into a Town where the people were going to hear a Lecture Sermon; the Minister of the place desired him to preach; which he did; and God blessed that very sermon to the effectual conversion of a stranger, who likewise happened to be in the assembly at that Time. Nay, sometimes a reproachful opprobrious word has been an occasion of so great an event as that of conversion is. *Austin* relates concerning his own gracious mother *Monica*. that one in a passion calling her [*Meribibula*] a Toss-pot, God sanctified that reproach to saving good to her soul. Our Famous Mr. *Perkins* over hearing a man say to another scholar in *Cambridge*, *thou art as vile a wretch as Perkins. Perkins himself is not worse than thou art*, that reproach stuck so upon him, as to occasion his repentance, and he became as eminent an instrument of God's glory, as any in the world in his time. Yet, again, A Minister who had so little of the fear of God in his heart, as to be a *Non-Resident*, and to keep diverse Livings, coming into a shop to buy something, a leafe of Mr. *Perkins*'s Catechisme was given to him for waste paper, and reading a few lines therein, he became a sincere Convert, approving himself a Faithful and painful minister of Christ. Matters of such vast importance

would

would never be occasioned by means so inconsiderable, if the great God had not had an hand therein. That then is the true reason of it.

USE. II. *Hence the best & only way for the Lords people to have all things wherein they are concerned, to be ordered well on their behalfe, is for them to make sure that God be their friend.* If the Lord be for us, it is no matter tho' all the world be against us. He can easily dash the designs of adversaries; and if God be with us and for us, it shall be so. *Isa.* 8. 9, 10. *Associate your selves, O ye people and you shall be broken in peices. Gird your selves, and you shall be broken in peices. take counsil together, and it shall come to nought; speake the word and it shall not stand: for God is with us.* He can save by his own immediate hand, And He hath all creatures at his command. He is *the Lord of hosts.* All the Angels in Heaven, are ready to do his pleasure. He that sitteth upon the throne, giveth out orders to them, and they move the wheel of Providence thus or so, as the most high shall direct them. And as for all other Creatures, He can command them to be on his peoples side. He made *the stars in their courses to fight against Sisera.* And the Winds and Seas do all obey him. In that memorable defeat of the *Spanish Armado* in the year 88.. a popish Prince said with indignation against Heaven, that the Winds and Seas, and the four Elements were all *Lutherans* at that Time. The high God who over rules all,

easily so dispose of affairs, as that the evil which enemies design against his people shall prove their own ruin and confusion. *Haman* laid a long train to blow up a great part of the Church, but himself and Family were thereby blown up for ever.

Now if we would have the lord to be our friend, two things are necessary.

1. *Supplication*. A praying People (tho' but few in number) can do marveilous things. More by Prayers than with Armies, That Scottish Queen, said she was more afraid of that holy man Mr. *Knox* his prayers, than of an Army of ten thousand men. And woe to that Man, that shall have the prayers of a praying people ingaged against him. It were better for him that a milstone were tyed about his neck, and he thrown with it into the midd'st of the Sea.

2. *Reformation*. A reforming People may meet with Shocks and Shakeings, but the Lord will appear for them. Soveraign Grace doth save a People tho' they are not duely reformed, yea, tho' they go on frowardly in the way of their own heart. He does heal them; but according to the Lords common dispensations, if men do reforme provoking evils, He appears wonderfully for them in the way of his Providence. Search the Scripture, and you will not find one instance of a People set for Reforma-

Reformation, but God delivered them out of the hands of those that sought their ruin. In *Samuel*'s Time there was an attempt against the Lord's People, but they hearkened to the word of God, so as to prepare their hearts unto the Lord, and to put away *Ashtaroth* and the strange Gods, and he then delivered them. In *Asa*'s Time, the People of God were sorely threatened. An Army of a Million of men came against them: But since *Asa* and the people with him did make a solemn Covenant in order to Reformation, divine Providence was ingaged for their deliverance. In *Jehoshaphat*'s Time, the Lords People were in Eminent Danger, but inasmuch as they were set upon reforming work, the Lord was with them, and His Providence wrought wonderfully for their Salvation. Once more, in *Hezekiah's* Time, the Lords People were again Distressed, and affraid that all would be Lost, but since there was a great Reformation as to things that were amiss, the Lord appeared and those dark clouds were soon Scattered.

And O that God would give unto all orders and degrees of men amongst his People in *New-England*, an Heart in good earnest to attend Scripture Expedients for the thorow Reformation of those Sins which have been solemnly acknowledged to be *Provoaking evils*; Then

will He that sitteth upon the Throne be for us; and *if God be for us who can be against us?*

The works of Divine Providence are great and wonderfull.

Revel. 15. 3.

——Great and marveilous are thy works.

IN the firſt verſe of this Chapter the Apoſtle *John* ſpeaks of a ſtrange Sight ſeen in Heaven, which he had a viſional Repreſentation of. *I ſaw another ſigne in Heaven, great and marveilous, ſeven Angels having the ſeven laſt Plagues.* It is ſayd to be a great and marveilous ſign, in reſpect of the things ſignified thereby which were wonderful and Amazing, This viſion did foreſhew that God will pour out the *vials of his wrath* upon the Antichriſtian Generation, until he has quite Cleared the world of them. And the *vials* are ſaid to be *the laſt plagues*, becauſe after they are all Poured forth, the Church of God ſhall be in a moſt happy and glorious eſtate. As after that there will not be ſuch ſinning as in former times, So neither ſuch plagues and curſes poured down from Heaven upon a ſinning world. And this *ſign* is ſaid to be *another* in oppoſition to that ſpoken of *Rev.* 12. 1. where we read of *a great wonder appearing in Heaven, a woman clothed with the Sun &c.* That

ſign in Heaven, did intimate that God would preſerve his People, notwithſtanding the fury of all *Pagan Perſecutors*, who improved all the Powers and Policies of Hell to deſtroy the Church, but could not prevail. This *other ſign*, was to ſignifie that the Church ſhould be preſerved and delivered from the Tyranny of *Antichriſt*. Antichriſt has been very potent. *All the world has wandered after the Beaſt*. The true Church of Chriſt has been brought very Low. yet God hath preſerved it, and he will accompliſh a final Salvation for all his people throughout the World; which is wonderful to conſider: and therefore *John* might well ſee *a ſign in Heaven*, which was *great and marveilous*.

In this, with the verſe immediatly preceding and that following, we have a Triumphant Song mentioned. Concerning which there are diverſe particulars noted.

1. We have a deſcription of the ſingers. They are deſcribed from the Harps which they had in their hands *ver.* 2. *having harps of God*. *i. e.* Holy ones: ſuch as did belong to the Temple. Like as we read of *the Lamp of God*, meaning that which appertained to the Temple, and ſo was holy as being ſeparated to the Lords uſe and ſervice. 1. *Sam.* 3. 3. the like is to be affirmed here. Theſe *Harpers* are likewiſe deſcribed from their Purity. Hence they are ſaid to ſtand *upon* (or near unto) *a ſea of glaſs mingled with*

with fire; meaning that they are such as come out of a *sacred Laver*, wherein they had been cleansed and purified. We read in another place in this Book of Revelation of *a sea of glass before the Throne. chap. 4. ver. 6.* which words allude unto the sacred Laver that was of divine Institution in the Jewish Church. There was a *Sea* or *Laver* belonging to the Tabernacle, and it was made of *glass* Exod. 38. 8. And a *sea* in *Solomon's* Temple. 1. *Kin.* 7. 23. Out of this the Priests were to wash themselves when they were employed in holy Ministrations. *Psal.* 26. 6. Hence when it is said here, that the Harpers stood by *a sea of glass mingled with Fire*, the true meaning of the expression may be, that they were such as had cleansed themselves from Antichristian Idolatries and Pollutions. Both water and fire are of a Purifying nature. And it is an eminent degree of Purity and Reformation, which these Harpers attain unto. Therefore they are said to be such as get the Victory, not only over the mark of the Beast, but over *the number of his Name.* They renounce *whatever is humane* in the Worship of God, and observe only Divine Institutions.

2. We have the matter or argument of this song, exppressed by these *Holy Harpers.* The summe of it is, That men should *fear and glorifie God. h. e.* that they ought to worship the true God, and him only. And this is said to be

the ſong of Moſes and of the Lamb, becauſe both Moſes and Chriſt have taught men this Leſſon. Both old and new Teſtament require this.

3. Here is alſo the motive inducing theſe *Songſters* thus to ſpeak, in the words before us at preſent to inſiſt on, *thy works are great and marvellous*. There are three great works of God, all which are great and wonderful.

1. His work of *Creation*. That ſuch a great world as this which our eyes behold, wherein there is ſuch wonderful variety of Creatures, and ſome of them excelling in glory, that all theſe ſhould be made out of nothing.

2. That work of the new Creation, or of *Redemption*; which is indeed the Lords Maſter-piece. That the fire-brands of Hell ſhould not only be brought from thence, but made to ſhine forever in the higheſt Heaven; and that it ſhould be brought to paſs in ſuch a way, that the eternal Son of God ſhould become a man, and die upon the Croſs that the *world* (*Gentiles as well as Jews*) through him might be ſaved. Angels wonder at this; and Saints in glory ſhall wonder at it throughout the days of Eternity.

3. There are the works of *divine Providence*, And of theſe are the words before us to be underſtood. And the *Doctrine* to be inſiſted on from them, is

Doct. *That the works of divine Providence are great and wonderful.*

In

In the Doctrinal handling of this Truth, two things are to be enquired into. 1. How does it appear that the works of divine providence are great and wonderful. 2. What works of providence are so.

Quest. 1. *How does it appear that the works of divine Providence are great and wonderful?*

Answ. 1. In that they are *excellent works. Isa.* 28. 29. *The Lord of hosts is wonderful in Counsil and excellent in working*, excellency causeth admiration. So are the works of divine providence excellent works; especially some providences are of a very God-like strain. The divine Power does appear therein so as to cause Admiration. Hence also these works are said to be *great*. Psal. 111. 2. *The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all that have pleasure therein*. Things are called *great* not only in respect of *Quantity* but of *Quality*; as we say *a great man*, we mean one that doth excel others. Thus the works of Providence are Excellent: Therefore great and marvellous.

2. *In that many works of Providence are deep and incomprehensible*. Men are not able to dive into them; nor to comprehend the reason of them. The Lord indeed knows the reason of all His proceedings, but it is often hid from men that they cannot tell what to make of such providences, only to stand amazed at them. Hence the *rings* in *Ezekiel*'s wheel are said to be *high*.

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They are out of the reach of men. *Ezek.* 1. 18. And the Lords *ways* are ſaid to be *in the deep*. Pſal. 36. 6. *Thy righteouſneſs is like the great mountains, thy judgements are a great deep; O Lord thou preſerveſt man and beaſt*. Thy judgements, *h.* e. the ways and methods of Providence, in Governing, Preſerving, and Diſpoſing of all the affairs of the world. There's no tracing of the Lord in the paths of his Providence. He walks in ſuch ways, as none can follow him; any more than they can ſee what's at the bottom of the Sea. *Pſal.* 77. 19. *Thy way is in the Sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy foot ſteps are not known.* Hence Solomon ſaith that *man can find nothing after God. Eccleſ.* 7. 14. Meaning that no man is able to trace Him. There is no ſuch track of providence, as that men ſhall thereby be able fully to underſtand by what Rules the Holy and Wiſe God ordereth all events Proſperous and adverſe which come to paſs in the world. His ways of Providence are unſearchable. Rom. 11. 33. *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgements, and his ways paſt finding out*. Saith the Apoſtle; that God ſhould ſo order by his providence, as that the Gentiles ſhould be called; and the Jews who were once the only People of God, be rejected by him, and that for ages and generations one after another, and yet that at laſt they ſhould be called again;

theſe

Theſe ways of his Providence are paſt finding out, and theſe judgements are unſearchable.

3. *Sometimes there is a ſeeming contradiction in divine providence* Hence in Ezek. 1. 16. 'tis ſaid *their appearance & their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel:* The providences of God ſeem to Interfere with one another ſometimes. One providence ſeems to look this way, another providence ſeems to look that way, quite contrary one to another. Hence theſe works are marveilous. Yea, and that which adds to the wonderment, is, in that the works of God ſometimes ſeem to run counter with his word: ſo that there is dark and amazing intricacie in the ways of providence. This is *a wheel within a wheel.* Not only wiſe but good men have ſometimes been put to a non-plus here. The God of Truth, hath in his word ſaid, it ſhall go well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked, and yet he ſo orders things by his providence, as that the righteous ſee nothing but miſerable days in this world, and the vileſt of men are at the ſame time in the higheſt proſperity. *Jer.* 12. 1. The Pen-man of the ſeventy third Pſalm was ſadly puzled, and had like to have loſt himſelf with amazement at this Thing.

4. *Great matters do many times ariſe out of ſmall beginnings.* It is therefore ſaid, *who hath deſpiſed the day of ſmall things? Zech.* 4. 10. The unbelieving Jews could not be perſwaded that any great

great matter would come of beginnings ſo deſpicable and inconſiderable. But the wonder-working providence of God made that which was nothing in their eyes, to become ſomething before he had done, The intereſt of the Goſpel and of Chriſtianity was at firſt very ſmall; but in a little Time it was ſpread far and near, which thing was indeed ſignified by *Ezekiel*'s *Sanctuary waters* that were at firſt up to the ankles, and then to the knees, but at laſt they became a river which could not be paſſed over. And to this ſenſe we are to interpret the Parable concerning the grain of muſtard ſeed *Mat.* 13. 32. *which is the leaſt of all ſeeds, but when it is grown it is the greateſt among herbs, & becometh a Tree.* Thus did the intereſt of the Goſpel and of Chriſt's Kingdom grow. At firſt there were only a few inconſiderable men, who had never ſtudied Arts & Languages, nor had any knowledge in thoſe things beſides what they were miraculouſly endowed with, to Publiſh the Goſpel. Yet in forty years time (even before the Jewiſh ſtate was brought unto its end *Mat.* 24. 14.) the Goſpel was ſpread over all the world. And after that Antichriſtian darkneſs had cover'd the Earth, when the light of the Goſpel began to break forth; it was at firſt very ſmall. Mr. *Brightman* ſuppoſeth that the words of my Text have ſpecial reference unto that, *viz.* the wonderfull ſucceſs which the Goſpel had in *Luther*'s Time. When he began

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preach againſt Indulgences little did the world think what that would come to. In a little Time whole Sates and Kingdoms renounced the Pope, and embraced the true Reformed Religion. *Great and marvellous were thoſe works of God.* Now inaſmuch as mighty things are brought out of inconſiderable beginnings, it is an evidence of the wonder-working Providence of God. But the Truth of this Doctrine will appear further by ſpeaking to the ſecond enquiry. *viz.*

Queſt. 2. *What works of Providence are great and wonderfull?*

Anſw. 1. *The ordinary Providence of God is ſo.*

That Law and Courſe of Nature which He hath Eſtabliſhed in the world, is a great and marvellous work. His ordering of Times and Seaſons, Heat and Cold, Seed-Time and Harveſt, Summer and winter, Day and Night in their ſeveral Viciſſitudes Theſe are wonderful works. The giving of rain and ſhowers from Heaven is a work of ordinary Providence, yet a wonderful work. *Job.* 5. 9, 10. *God doeth great things and unſearchable, marvellous things without number, who giveth rain upon the earth, and ſendeth waters upon the fields* The Cauſing of Clouds and vapours to aſcend and deſcend, is mentioned amongſt the wonderful works of God. *Job.* 37. 14. *Conſider the wonderous works of God.*

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what wondrous works? In *ver.* 16. 'tis said; *doſt thou know the ballancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in kowledge?* Some of the clouds are lifted up higher, others hang down lower, like unto *ballances*; God maketh thoſe vapours to be higher or lower, according as he means to uſe them for the good or hurt of his Creatures, and that with as much exactneſs as if he weighed them all with a Ballance. Theſe are marveilous works. The raiſing and allaying of mighty ſtorms, is that which in the ordinary courſe of Providence is brought to paſs, yet thoſe are wonderful works. *They that go down to the ſea in ſhips, that do buſineſs in great waters; Theſe ſee the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiſeth the ſtormy Wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof, He maketh the ſtorm a calm, O that men would prayſe the Lord for his goodneſs and for his wonderful works to the children of men. Pſa.* 107. 23. *&c.*

2. *There are Extraordinary providences.* Theſe are by way of Eminency *great and marvellous works of God*. Such as Signs and Prodigies, which are more rarely ſeen in the world. Theſe are called *wonders*, *Pſal.* 135. 9. for that they cauſe wonderment in the world; And more eſpecialy when they are of a miraculous nature. *Mat.* 7. 22. *Have not we in thy name done many wonderful works*. Works which are above and beyond

beyond the Conſtituted order of Nature. There are alſo extraordinary mercies and extraordinary judgements, which the Providence of God does ſometimes diſpenſe towards the children of men. Sometimes *the wheels are lift up from the earth*. Ezek. 1. 19. *h. e.* they go out of the ordinary road.

3. *The Providence of God in Upholding his Church in the world is wonderful*. The truth is, that the Church's being continued ſucceſſively on the earth throughout all generations, is one of the greateſt wonders of divine Providence. For the Church is but a ſmall company. *By whom ſhall Jacob ariſe for he is ſmall? A little little Flock*: but their enemies are many and mighty and inraged againſt them. They want neither Will nor Power to deſtroy the Church: yet it is preſerved ſtill. How ſo? But becauſe the works of God are *great and marvellous*. There is alwais a wonderful Providence of God at work in the Church,s preſervation. It hath been in the water often, and yet is not drowned. It has been in the fire often and yet is not burned. The Church hath been in the midſt of a Sea of blood and fire, and yet it liveth ſtill. This is a great and wonderful thing. *Moſes* wondred when he ſaw *the buſh burning with fire and not conſumed, and he ſaid, I will now turn aſide and ſee this great ſight, why the buſh is not burnt*. *Exod.* 3. 23. The Church of God is this Buſh, that

that has been ail on a light fire many years, and yet behold it is not Conſumed, no nor ever ſhall be.

4. *The Providence of God in Reforming his Church is wonderful.* The Great and marveilous works which the Text ſpeaks of, may in part be underſtood concerning that. Eſpecialy when there has been great Degeneracy, deep and univerſal Apoſtacy, the work of Reformation is then wonderful. *Iſai.* 1. 6, 25, 29. That notwithſtanding ſuch dangerous and deadly wounds the Church ſhould live. Thus the *Antichriſtian Apoſtacy* was very great. All the world wondered after the Beaſt. yet God by his providence hath ſo ordered matters, as that a bleſſed number appear *ſtanding by a ſea of glaſs mingled with Fire*, even a Purged, refined, Reformed People, *great and marveilous* have been the works of God in this Reſpect. The Lord many times brings about the Reformation of his People by ſtrange and wonderful ways. Sometimes by marvellous Judgements; by ſharp and terrible perſecutions, which one would think ſhould deſtroy them, but the wonderful Providence of God over rules things ſo, as that they ſhall only be reformed and refined by the fire of divine Judgement. That was the effect of the *Aſſirian Perſecution Iſai.* 27. 9. And of that under *Antiochus.* Some of the Lords deareſt ſervants fell into the furnace of that Perſecution to *try them*

and

try them, and to purge them, and to make them white. Dan. 11. 35. Nay, ſometimes ſtrange Confuſions have iſſued in a glorious work of Reformation. In divers places of the world it has been ſo. And therefore well may it be ſaid, *great and marveilous are thy works*, inaſmuch as he brings light out of darkneſs, order and beauty out of the greateſt diſorder and Confuſion.

5. *The Providence of God in delivering his Church is very wonderful.* The thing it ſelf is wonderful, Conſidering how great and powerful their oppreſſors are. And the Churches deliverance is the more wonderful in reſpect of the Time of it. Commonly it is when things are brought to the greateſt extreamities imaginable. When *Iſaac* is bound, and layd upon the Altar, and the knife is lifted up to cut his throat, then the Lord ſteps in and ſaveth, and to this day it may be ſaid, *in the mount the Lord will be ſeen*. When his people are in an helpleſs eſtate, when there is no deliverer on earth for them, the wonder-working providence of God is ſeen in their Salvation *Deut.* 22. 29. When they leaſt expect it, then does their deliverance come. *Zec.* 14. 6, 7. *It ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the light ſhall not be Clear nor dark, —— but at evening time it ſhall be light.* One would think that after a dark and cloudy day, at evening time it ſhould be more dark than ever; but behold then Contrary to all humane expectation,

it is Light. At the time when God brought his people out of Egypt, they little expected so glorious a Salvation. And therefore with respect unto that deliverance, the prophet sayth *thou didst terrible things which we looked not for*. *Isai.* 64. 3. When *Pharaoh* was drowned, and so the head in the house of the wicked wounded to death, little did the Childrenof *Israel* think that the God of their salvation would answer their Prayers by such terrible things in Righteousness against their oppressors. And the providence of God is wonderful, in respect of the way and meanes whereby he delivers his people. Oftentimes it is in such a way as men never thought of. Sometimes the Lord makes their Adversaries to be at Variance amongst themselves that so his servants who are appointed to dye may be delivered. Sometimes God finds them other work to doe, that they shall not be at leisure to prosecute their designs intended against his People. Saul and his men compassed David round about to take him. Men judgeing according to all humane Probability would now conclude that it is impossible for David to escape: but behold the providence of God, just at the nick of time, *there comes a messenger to Saul, saying Haste thee and come, for the Philistines have invaded the Land, Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines.* 1. *Sam.* 23. 26, 27. Saul could

not follow his game (as one ſpeaketh) in hunting David like a Partridge on the mountains, there was another hunting match provided for him, when the *Philiſtines* invaded the Land. And many ſuch things are with the Lord ſtill. About an hundred years agoe, the *Emperour* of *Germany* was intending to root out the Proteſtant Name and Intereſt, but the Pope blew up the bellows of Contention between him and the King of *France*, by which meanes the deſign was prevented. And ſeveral times, when the Emperour was minded to deſtroy his Proteſtant Subjects, God let looſe the great Turk upon the Empire, and ſo diverted the evil deſigns againſt his people, which had been long preparing, and were become ripe for execution. Such works are great and marvellous.

6. *The Providence of God in deſtroying the Enemies of his People, is great and wonderful.* Of this my text ſpeaks. Thoſe *Vials* full of the wrathful Judgements of God, which have been, and ſhall be, poured out upon the Antichriſtian Generation, are amongſt the great and marvellous works of God. His Providence is wonderful in reſpect of the Time when he poureth down vials of divine Judgements upon his Enemies. It is at the Time when they are moſt ſecure. It is noted Concerning *Belſhazzar*, that he made a feaſt for a Thouſand of his Lords, and in that night was Belſhazzar the King of the Chaldeans

slain with the Sword, *Dan.* 5. 1, 30. Thus th
Assyrians *were folded together*, there were stron
Combinations amongst them, and thence the
were *drunk* with Confidence and Security, an
now *shall they be devoured as stubble fully dry*
Nah. 1. 10. When the Enemies are in th
Hight of their Resolutions against the People o
God, He meets with them, and cuts them of
for ever. *Exod.* 15. 9. *The enemy said, I will*
Pursue, I will overtake, my lust shall be satisfied up
on them &c. And when did Pharaoh say this
It was just before God drowned and damn'd hi
forever. *Who is like unto thee O Lord doing won*
ders! Be wise O ye Kings, and be instructed O
Judges of the earth, Kiss the Son lest he be an
gry, and *you perish in the way*, when his wrath
kindled but a little. So did *Julian* the Apostate
He was resolved when he returned from his wa
with the Persians, to Sacrifice unto his Idols i
the blood of Christians; but he *perished on the way*
an Arrow from Heaven smote him, before h
could fully accomplish the mischief he intend
ed. And the providence of God is wonderfu
in respect of the *means* whereby his enemies ar
destroyed. Sometimes he maketh them destro
one another. He setteth the Egyptians again
the Egyptians. When the sleeping Midianite
were alarum'd with that amazing Watch-word
the sword of the Lord and of Gideon, the sword o
the Lord and of Gideon; like mad men they drew

their swords every man against his fellow, and all the host ran and cryed and fled. The like happ'ned in Jonathan's Time amongst the Philistines. And again in the days of Jehoshaphat, *Every one helped to destroy one another*. And to this day, God does for his people as *in the day of Midian*. It is foretold in the Scripture that it shall be thus with the enemies of the Church in the days of the Gospel. *A great tumult from the Lord shall be among them, and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.* Zech. 14. 13. Yea, sometimes God by his providence does so order matters, as that his enemies shall design and practise such things as shall end in their own ruin. The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Let destruction come upon him at unawares, and let his net that he has hid catch himself, into that very destruction let him fall. *Psal.* 9. 16. and 35. 8. *Haman* plotted his own Ruin, when he devised mischief against the people of God.

USE. *Here is matter of Encouragement to the Faith of God's People respecting the Present state of the Church.* Things look at this day with a dark and dismal face: Well but we have this to encourage us: there is a God whose works are great and marvellous.

Consider. 1. *God is able to deliver his People.*

As the three worthies said, *our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace. Dan.* 3. 27. Tho' they were but three despised men, quite out of favour, and hated for their Religion, and the greatest Emperour that ever lived was furiously and resolvedly set to destroy them, yet they knew that God was able to deliver them. It is true, that at this day the Church of God in the world is in greater danger than has been known for a long time. Shall our hearts now sink under discouragement and unbelief? What tho' things are brought to a marvellous Low ebb, the Lord who sitteth upon the Floods forever, can soon cause the Tide to Turn. He *whose works are great and marvellous* can pour down an unexpected *Viel of wrath* upon his enemies. He is able to Turn the wheel of providence suddenly, that the Antichristian Generation shall be Crushed under it. When the Witnesses are slayn they must rise again suddenly: why? *The spirit of life from God shall enter into them. Rev.* 11. 11. Their Resurrection will be brought about by the wonder working Povidence of God. He can soon cause an *Earth-quake* that shall roll away the stone under the weight whereof the slayn witnesses are oppressed and suppressed for a while. When the Lords people of Old were buried in a Babylonian grave, and never like to rise out of that grave, an unexpected war broke out between the

Persians

Persians and the Babylonians, and that *Earthquake* opened the grave for the Jews, so that they were restored to their former Liberties and enjoyments. Such great and marvellous works can the most High God bring to pass when Hee pleaseth.

Consider. 2. *That the days are at hand wherein the Lord will do great and wonderful things.* He will speedily be avenged for his elect who are crying to him day and night, He will pour down the most fearful and amazing Vials of wrath upon their Oppressors that ever yet were known. The world is at this day in an Uproar. The four Winds of Heaven are striving upon the great Sea. We hear the rushing of the Nations. The Lord of hosts is Mustering the Nations for the Battle, which is a sign that there are great things upon the wheel, and like to be *Overturnings*, *Overturnings*, *Overturnings*, in the earth. Some think that the *fourth Vial* is now pouring out upon *the sun* in the Antichristian world. However, it will not be long before the throne of the Beast shall have a Vial Poured thereon; Immediately upon which the Jews are Converted, and then the *works of God will be great and marvellous.* The Captive exile hastneth. The great Prophecies and Promises contained in the Scriptures, to be fulfilled in the latter days, are near their accomplishment; and then the workings of divine Providence will be most won-

wonderful. The Lord Jesus knows, that the Time is near, wherein he shall have a glorious Kingdom in this world. *The Kingdoms of the world shall become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever.* And now that the Time is near, Christ longs to be possessed of that Kingdom; and therefore hee will make quick work with his enemies. He will ruinate more Enemies in one age now, than in many formerly. I am perswaded, that ere this Generation be passed away, the Lord Jesus will do more marvellous works in the world, than ever was done in one Generation since the world began. We now live in the extremity of Times, Motions and Alterations being come near the Center, they will be exceeding swift and speedy. As an encouragement unto Faith.

Consider. 3. *The great and wonderful things which God has done for his New-England People.* The truth is, that the setting up of Christ's Kingdom in this Part of the world, is one of the Wonders of divine providence, which this last age has seen. There was a wondrous hand of God in bringing so many of his People hither; that the hearts of those who dwelt in much remoteness from one another should be alike moved and inclined to venture themselves and theirs into a waste and howling Wilderness, that so they might build a Sanctuary for the

Lords

Lords Name therein. And there was a wonderful providence of God ſeen in making way for the ſettlement of his People here. For he caſt out the Heathen before them; firſt by the Plague, and after by the Small Pox, ſo as that thouſands and thouſands were ſwept away by thoſe Beſoms of deſtruction, who elſe would probably have him inſtigated by Satan, ſo as to have hindred the planting of the Goſpel and the eſtabliſhment of the Kingdom of Chriſt in theſe remote corners of the earth. And it is a great and marvellous work of God, that a place ſhould be brought to ſuch Conſiderableneſs in ſo ſhort a Time. Moſes ſpake to the Children of Iſrael ſaying as in Deut. 4. 32, 34. *Ask from the one ſide of Heaven to the other, whether there hath been any ſuch thing as this great thing; ... Hath God aſſayed to take him a Nation out from the midſt of a Nation?* Truly the Lord has taken his People here out of the midſt of a Nation, and in a few years caufed a ſmall number to become like a little Nation. He hath planted our Heavens and layd the foundations of our earth. Conſider all *the out-goings of the* Engliſh *Nation*, and you will not ſee the like. Some of you that are here before the Lord this day, can remember the Time when there were but few Chriſtians in this great Town, whereas now there are three Churches of Jeſus Chriſt therein. Yea, there are who can remember, when there

was

was not ſo much as one Chriſtian in all this Land; but at this day there are above fourſcore Churches of God amongſt the *Engliſh*, beſides ſeveral amongſt the *Indians*. And ſhall we think that God has done theſe great and marvellous things, that ſo all his work might be deſtroyed again within one Generation? Some of the firſt Generation are yet with us, the Kindneſs of whoſe youth when they followed him into a wilderneſs, into a Land which was not ſown, God ſtill remembers and will remember. Search the Records of Ancient times, and you will never find, that when God has Created a new Heaven and a new earth, all was layd utterly waſte and deſolate, whileſt any of thoſe whom God honoured to be the firſt foundation were living. Therefore be not faithleſs but believing. The Lord may afflict us becauſe of our Backſlidings which are many, but he will not deſtroy us. Call to mind the former Times. Has not God wrought wonderfully for us? Hath he not done ſo in the days of our Fathers, and in our days alſo? Has he not rebuked the Heathen, and that more than once for our ſakes, yea and other enemies too? And is not our God as able to deliver us as ever. Our Fathers truſted in him, and He delivered them, yea they truſted in him and were not Confounded. And if their Children after them, ſhall truſt in the God of their Fathers, will he ſuffer them to be Confounded?

confounded? The Scriptnre ſpeaks of Mountains being removed by Faith. My Brethren, a few of you may by ſecret actings of Faith in prayer make mountains to ſhake; you may cauſe mountains to come tumbling down, that the whole world ſhall *ecchо* with the ſound of their fall. Therefore let us truſt in the Lord forever; even in that God *who alone doeth wondrous Things.*

A

God

God does wonderfully suit his Judgments according to what the sins of men have been.

Judg. 1. 7.

And Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten Kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table.

A Very great part of the Holy Scripture is Historical. In particular this book of *Judges* is one of the Historicall Books of the old Testament. Therein an account is given of the state of Israel (both civil and ecclesiastical) for the space of three hundred years *viz.* from the death of *Joshuah* until *Eli*'s Time. In the beginning of this chapter we have the history of the war between the Children of Israel and the Canaanites. Concerning which several things are specified.

1. The Tribe which did by divine direction first engage in this war, namely the Tribe of *Judah* who took *Simeon* with him, as we see in the second and third Verses.

2. The place where this Ingagement was, *sc.* at a place called *Bezek*.

Thirdly

3. The event and success of this undertaking. The Children of Israel obtaind a marvellous victory. For the body of the Enemy was destroyed. *ver.* 4. And *Adonibezek*, (the Lord of that place as his name imports) was taken Prisoner. Concerning him, there is a very memorable passage related in this with the preceding verse.

1. What the Israelites did to him. ver. 6. *They cut off his thumbs and his great toes.* The reason of their so doing is not expressed. Some think that they had heard of his cruelty to Others: or it may be they had found some in *Bezek* who were the monuments of his bloody and barbarous Tyranny, that might inform them what Adonibezek had done, and they might look upon it as a duty to Retaliate upon him the wickedness committed by him. Others suppose that they knew nothing of what he had done, only that this Punishment was inflicted by the over ruling providence of God.

2. Here is expressed *Adonibezek*'s Confession, as in the words before us now to speak unto. 1. He confesseth his own bloody Fact. He confesseth that he dealt in that barbarous manner with 70 Kings *h. e.* principal Rulers in the neighbour Cities. It is not likely that this was done all at the same time, but successively. However, it was a discovery of great Inhumanity in this barbarous Tyrant. 2. He confesseth

that God was righteous in so ordering by his providence, as that the very same cruelty which he had exercised to others, was now come upon him: That God had found him out and justly requited him. The doctrine which may therefore at Present be insisted on, is

Doct. *That the Providence of God does wonderfully suit his Judgements according to what the sins of men have been.* For the further clearing of this Truth, we may enquire 1. In what respects the divine providence does suit his Judgements to the sins of men. 2. The Reasons of it.

Quere 1. *In what respects does the Providence of God suit his Judgements to the sins of men?*

Answ. *God does sometimes retaliate upon men, the very same evils which they have done, or designed to doe against others* So that there is a [*Tautopatheia*] a suffering in the same kind; the sinner is paid off in his own Coyn. So it was with *Adonibezek* here in my Text. And there are many other Instances in the Scripture which confirm this Truth *Pharaoh* and the Egyptians sinned in destroying the Children of Israel, Therefore God Punnished them by sending the destroying Angel amongst them, who destroyed a child in every house in Egypt. They moreover sinned in causing the Israelitish Infants to be drowned; therefore they themselves were at last drowned in the Red sea. The *Tyrians* and

Zidonians

Zidonians sold the Children of *Judah* unto the *Grecians* that they might remove them far from their borders: And observe how the Lord did return it upon them, who saith *Joel* 3. 8. *I will sell your Sons and your daughters into the hand of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans to a people far off; for the Lord hath spoken it.* We read Concerning *Jehoram*, that he murderd all his Fathers Sons save one; just so was he served Himself. The wonderful and righteous Providence of God so ordered, as that all his sons save one were murdered by the Philistines and the Arabians. 2. *Chron.* 21. 4, 17. It is Recorded Concerning *Joash*, that he with his servants conspired together to kill the Prophet: And at last his servants Conspire together to kill him in his owne house, that so his wickedness might be retaliated upon him. 2. *Chron.* 24. 22, 25. And it is noted of *Jehoiakim* that he did not only murder the Prophet *Urijah*, but he would not suffer him to have au honourable Burial, as a man of his calling and worth ought to have had. Jer 26. 23. *Jehoiakim the King slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the Graves of the Common people.* As if the holy Prophet had not been worthy of an honourable Interrment: Now for all *Jehoiakim* was a great man no less than a Prince, God in his just providence does so order as that he should not have an honourable interment but, *he was buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and*

cast

cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem. Jer. 22. 19. Yet further, the Righteous God doth sometimes in the way of his Providence Retaliate upon men the evil which they have designed against others. Tho' they never did those things, only attempted the doing of them, God *renders to them according to the wickedness of their own endeavours*. A wicked man has conceived mischief, and brought forth falshood. He made a Pit and digged it, and is fallen into the Ditch which he made: his mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate. *Psal.* 7. 14, 15, 16. Thus it was with those that cast the 3 Godly Princes into the fiery furnace, *the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach Meshach & Abednego*. And those that were *Promoters* or *Informers* against the prophet *Daniel* that very mischief which they designed against him, the Providence of God turned upon them, and upon their Families *Dan.* 6. 24. *They brought those men which had accused Daniel, and cast them into the den of Lions, them, their children and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in peices or ever they came at the bottom of the den*. And the mischief which *Haman* devised against *Mordecai* and the Jews, was returned upon his own head: He might truly have said *as I would have done so hath God requited me*. and as I have done and designed in my heart, so

hath

hath God done to me. And not only the Scriptures but humane writings are full of examples concerning God's *Retaliating* upon men the evils which they have done to others. Eccleſiaſtical ſtory reports of the daughter of *Herodias*, who deſired that *John Baptiſt*'s head might be cut off, that going upon the Ice, it gave way, and ſuddenly cloſed again, ſo as that her head was thereby cut off. In Hiſtories we read of many who having murdered others, they have at laſt bin murdered themſelvs, If they have ſtabbed others, they have bin ſtabbed themſelvs: If they have poyſoned others, they have been poyſoned themſelves. If they have dealt cruelly and barbarouſly with others, the providence of God hath at length Retaliated it upon Themſelves.

2. *The Judgments which befal men have oftentimes ſome Reſemblance and Analogy with their Sins.* Tho' the puniſhment is not the very ſame with the evil which they have done, yet there is an [*omoiopatheia*] a notable *Conformity* and *Similitude* between the Sin and the puniſhment. If not the very ſame evil which they have done, yet a Judgment in nature and quality like unto it ſhall come upon them. The old world was overflown with wickedneſs, Hence they were puniſhed with an overflowing of waters. God puniſhed one flood with another; A flood of prophaneſs with a flood of waters, which pro-

proved their ruin. The Israelites sinned by their *Tongues* and venemous expressions against the Lords faithful servants; and He plagued them with the venemous *Tongues* of fiery serpents. *Nadab* and *Abihu* sinned by offering strange *fire*; and therefore *fire* came down from Heaven and consumed them. *Corah* sinned by making a *Schism* in the Church; and the earth made a *Schism* & swallowed him up, that he went down alive into the Pit. The Jews sinned in *serving* other Gods besides their own; therefore they were punished in being *made to serve* other Lords and Kings besides their own *Neh.* 9. 36, 37. *Jer.* 5. 19. *Solomon* sinned in *dividing* the worship which was due to God alone, between him and the Idols whom his wife served; therefore (and that was a suitable Judgment) the Kingdome must be *divided* between his son and another. He served God with an *imperfect* Heart, and God left him but an *imperfect* Kingdom. 1. *King.* 11. 4. The Christians did not carry it towards the body of Christ in the Holy ordinance of the *Lords Supper* as they ought to have done; for which cause God punished them with *bodily* diseases and Death. Strange sins are followed with Strange Punishments, *Job.* 31. 3. New sins with New punishments. Hence in these last dayes there are new kinds of diseases which in former ages were not known, for there are *Inventers of evil things*, and wickedness

wickedneſs formerly unheard of. Sins with the body are oft puniſhed with bodily diſeaſes and miſeries. The Lord ſaid to Jezabel, *I will caſt her into a bed, and them that commit adultry with her into great tribulation*. *Ahab* and *Jezabel* had ſinned with their Bodyes, and God plagued them in their children the natural fruit of their Bodyes. We know what direful vengeance came upon thoſe miſerable children for the ſake of their wicked parents, when ſeventy of them had their heads cut off in one day, and were layd in two heaps at the City gates, for every one to gaze and be aſtoniſhed at. And Spiritual Sins are uſualy puniſhed with Spiritual Plagues. *Hoſ.* 8. 11. *Becauſe Ephraim has made many altars to ſin, altars ſhall be unto him to ſin*. They ſinned in building Altars, therefore they ſhould be left to commit that ſin until it proved their ruin. And *Ezekiel* ſpeaks of *mirey places and mariſhes which ſhall not be healed but ſhall be given to ſalt*: That was their ſin they would not be healed, and this ſhall be their puniſhment *they ſhal not be healed*. So that Spiritual Sins are followed with Spiritual plagues and puniſhments upon the ſouls of men.

3. *The Providence of God does ſometimes ſute the Judgments which befal men, to their ſins, in reſpect of the Inſtruments which do cauſe or occaſion their trouble*. Sometimes as to things and many Times as to Perſons it is ſo. *Siſera* ſinned in

making *Iron Chariots* to destroy the Children of Israel, but therefore he himself was destroyed with a *nail of iron*. *Abimelech* caused his bretheren to be murdered *upon a stone*: Now observe the Providence and Judgment of God; for this *Abimelech* was himselfe afterwards killed *with a stone*. Thus God rendred to him the wickedness which he did in slaying his brethren all upon one stone, *Judg.* 9. 5, 53. 56. *Jezabel* by a letter written to Jezreel caused the blood of Naboth to be shed: And by a letter from Jezreel was the blood of her children shed. It is by Ecclesiastical Historians reported, that the *Donatists* give the holy elements to dogs; and afterwards these wicked men were themselves devoured by dogs. The Lord in his alwise providence does frequently so dispose, as that the thing which has been an occasion of sin shall become an occasion of sorrow. If men abuse and pervert any Creature to sin against God thereby, they are commonly Punished therein: It may be God depriveth them of that creature-Comfort and so punisheth them, *Hosea.* 2. 8, 9. *She did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oyl & multiply'd her silver & gold, which they prepared for Baal, therefore will I return and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof*. They that lived in Sodom and Gomorrah sinned by fulness of bread, that is to say by intemperance in the use of meat and drink.

Therefore

Therefore God in Judgment took their bread away, and that by the hands of their enemies, *who took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals and went their way, Gen.* 14. 11. The haughty Daughters of Sion sinned by pride in apparel, therefore did the Lord punish them by *taking away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments and the changeable suits of apparel. Isa.* 3. 18. If men set their hearts inordinately upon any Creature-comfort, belike they will first or last meet with much affliction therein and thereby. Either God will punish them by takeing away that which their hearts are in ordinately set upon, or else He will cause that Idol to become a scourge and plague. So when Parents do sinfuly indulge their children they commonly meet with much affliction in them. *Isaac* did too much indulge *Esau* who afterwards became a grief of mind to his father. *Eli* was a sinfully indulgent Father, therefore the increase of his house did either die in the flower of their age, or if they lived it was to consume the eyes and grieve the heart of their father. 1. *Sam.* 2. 33. *David* also tho' a wise and very good man, was guilty of sin in overmuch indulgence to his children, and diverse of them proved heart-breaking sorrows, and a great dishonour to their Fathers Name. Or, if men cause others to sin, then those persons whome they have made to sin shall become heavy Plagues and punishments unto

them. The *Jews* put the *Romans* upon crucifying Chriſt, and forty years after thoſe very Romans which they had Cauſed to ſin, became their Scourges, yea their Ruin. Or, if men (eſpecially Profeſſors of Religion) ſhall ſuffer others to draw them into ſin, many times they that have been the occaſion of their ſinning, will occaſion them no ſmall ſufferings. The Lord charged his People that they ſhould not have to doe with the wicked Nations that they lived among, and told them, that if they did ſuffer themſelvs to be inſnared by them, *they ſhall become ſcourges in their ſides and thorns in their eyes*, *Joſh.* 23. 13. The Jews ſinned by Imitating the manners of the Aſſyrians and Babylonians: And thoſe did God make the Inſtruments of executing vengeance upon them; Thoſe *Paramours* on whom they had doted, the Lord raiſed up againſt them, and cauſed them to deal furiouſly, *Ezek.* 23. 20, 22, 25. *Jehoſhaphat* ſinned by being too familiar with wicked *Ahab*. therefore divine providence ſo ordered matters as that he was by meanes of Ahab brought into great danger of looſing his life. The Babylonians were an occaſion of ſin to *Hezekiah*, and afterwards the Inſtruments of deſtroying his Family: He ſinned with them, and was puniſhed by them.

4. *The Providence of God does ſometimes ſuit his Judgments according to what the ſins of men have*

have been, in reſpect of thoſe Circumſtances of Place and Time where and when the Judgment ſhall take hold on them. It may be Judgment ſhall overtake them in that very place where they have ſinned. The prophet was bid ſay to Ahab 1. *King*. 11. 19. *In the place where the dogs licked the bloud of Naboth, ſhall dogs lick thy bloud, even thine*. And ſo we know it came to paſs; and when *Jehu* ſaw it he remembred the word of the Lord. We read alſo that *Joſiah* took the bones of the Idolatrous Prieſts and burnt them upon the Altar and polluted it, 2. *King*. 33. 16. At the Altar was the place where they had ſinned, and therefore at that place muſt their bodyes be ſo uſed, as a mark of the Lords indignation for the ſins which there they had commited. And as for that circumſtance of Time, the Povidence of God does ſometimes ſo order matters, as that Judgment ſhall come upon men at the very ſame Time of the Year when the ſin was committed which He puniſheth them for. The Jews did by the Authority of *Rome*, Crucify the Son of God at the Time of the Paſſover; And it was at the Time of the Paſſover that the Roman Army beſieged Jeruſalem, until the days of vengeance came upon the Jewiſh Nation. Sometimes Judgment befals a man on the very ſame Day of the year on the which he committed that ſin, for the which God hath a peculiar Controverſie with him. Hiſtorians

note concerning *Pompey*, that he came to a miſerable End the ſame day of the year on which he had Triumphed for the miſeries & the Captivities of the People of God. Many times when divine Judgment overtakes men for that ſin of Sabbath breaking, it lights upon them on the Sabbath day: That which was their chief day of Sinning ſhall be their day of Suffering. Jeruſalem was twice taken on the Sabbath day. The Proteſtants in *Bohemia* were guilty of much ſin in reſpect of their profanations of the Lords holy day, and it is obſervable that *Pragua* (their chief City) was taken by the Enemy on that day. But thus we ſee that the Providence of God doth wonderfully ſute his Judgments to what the ſins of men have been.

But what Reaſon is there for this?

Reaſ. 1. *That ſo men may be convinced that there is a God, and that there is a Providence.* Job. 19. 29. *That ye may know there is a Judgment.* Pſal. 9. 16. *God is known by the Judgments which he executeth.* It is a mighty conviction to the world that there is a God, and that this God taketh notice of what is done in the world, and that he is a Holy and a righteous God, when He ſhall diſpenſe unto men rewards according to what their works have been. Hence as He does ſometimes let Sinners alone in their ſins, as to Temporal Plagues, that ſo men might know that there is another world

world and a Judgment to come; So He does many times punish them here, that so they may see that there is a God and that there is a providence: *So that a man shall say ----- verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth. Psal.* 58. 11. Therefore David prayed that God would bring exemplary Punishment on the wicked that so it might be known that His hand of Providence did it. *That they may know that this is thy hand: that thou Lord hast done it. Psal* 109. 27. and 59. 13.

Reas. 2. *That so it may be known what sinners are punished for.* Sometimes others may see what these and those are punished for: 'Tis true men are exceeding apt to Censure those that are afflicted, and to misinterpret the providences of God, which to do is a great sin: Nevertheless when the wickedness of any persons has been notorious, and Judgment suitable to their sins falleth upon them, all about them may with trembling hearts conclude this Judgment cometh for that sin. 2. *King.* 9. 36. *Revel.* 16. 5, 6. But especially Sinners themselves may know what God does punish them for. The heart of a sinner is privy to that which others know nothing of: Hence his conscience in his own breast reads him a sad Lecture, when this or that evil befals him, And sometimes men may by the Judgement which cometh upon them, as certainly know what

what they are puniſhed for, as if they ſhould hear a voice from Heaven ſaying to them, *It is for ſuch a ſin*. Thus *Adoni-bezek* here in my Text, his conſcience told him that he had been cruel to others, and that the Juſtice of God had now met with him for it. So *Joſeph*'s Brethren Geneſ. 42. 21, *They ſaid one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul when he beſought us and we would not hear, therefore is this evil come upon us*. They thought with themſelves, The Governor of Egypt deals harſhly with us tho' we never wronged him: you are juſtly ſerved (ſayes Conſcience) for you dealt harſhly with your brother *Joſeph* who never wronged you: And ſee what they ſay in *ver.* 28. when they ſaw mony in their Sacks mouthes, ------- *their heart failed them, and they were afraid, ſaying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us*. See here (ſayth Conſcience) God has met with you: What does this money bring to mind? do not you remember that you ſold your brother for mony into Egypt? And now God will be even with you for all. Hence the Lord does ſometimes extort Confeſſions out of the mouthes of ſinners (as he did here out of *Adonibezek*'s) that they openly acknowledge they have Committed ſuch ſins, and that therefore the righteous God has ſo puniſhed them. It is ſtoried Concerning the Emperour *Mauritius*, that he might for a ſmall ſumme of money

money have redeemed the Children of many Christian Captives, but his hard and covetous heart would not do it: Not long after, he himself was taken a prisoner, and his Children were all slain before his eyes; then did he call to mind how he had refused to deliver the Children of others, when it lay in his power to have done it: and as his own Children were killing, he uttered these words *Thou art righteous O Lord, because thou hast judged thus.*

USE. By way of Information.

Inform. I. *Hence, God will in the Course of his Providence proportion rewards of mercy according to what the works of men have been.* As he dispenseth Judgments according to evil works, so mercies according to good works; only with this difference that in the one there is merit but not in the other. When God punisheth men they receive the due desert of their deeds, but when he bestows blessings; that's meer mercy. God dispenseth mercies (tho not for the desert of yet) according to the works of men, *Math.* 5. 7. *Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtaine mercy.* We have many instances in the Scripture to this purpose. It is noted Concerning the Egyptian Midwives that because they feared God more than Pharaoh, and therefore would not murder the Children of the Hebrews when the cruel King Commanded them; *God dealt well with them and made them houses. Exod.* 1. 21. It is by

Children

Children that the house (the Family that is) is made. The Midwives saved the lives of the Hebrews Children, and God spared the lives of their children. So were they suitably rewarded. God will never be behind hand with men. If they doe any good work with a sincere heart, He will reward it at the last day: Yea and one way or other in this world too, *Mark.* 10. 30. If the good which they doe come not upon themselvs in their own persons; it will come upon their posterity: That some one or other shall be as good to theirs as ever they were to any.

Inform. 2. *Hence, there is nothing gained by sinning against God.* The apostle sayth *what fruit* that is what gain? what profit? *had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* *Rom.* 6. 21. Of a truth there is nothing gained by Sin, but Sorrow and Shame. Men think to gain by sin, they suppose they shall have credit or pleasure, or profit thereby, else they would not commit such sins, but they will find themselves disappointed. It will not quit cost to commit the most pleasant and gainful sin in the world: the temporal Judgments which usually follow upon it, have more of evil and bitterness in them, than there is pleasure to be enjoyed in the wayes of sin. But then if we duly Consider the other Judgments which will certainly follow without Repentance, we must needs con-

fess

that there is infinitly more loſt than gained by ſin: Spiritual Judgments follow. Either God ſends *all his plagues upon the heart of* a Sinner, whereby He is hardened forever, or elſe there are ſtings and wounds in the Conſcience. Sin leaveth a ſting behind it in the ſoul which nothing but the bloud of Chriſt can ever get out. And how dolorous, how painfull, how intolerable is that wound! *The ſpirit of a man will ſuſtein his infirmity*; A man that has a great ſpirit will bear up under any other infirmity; *but a wounded ſpirit who can bear? Prov.* 18. 14. When the arrows of the Almighty ſtick faſt in the ſoul, who can endure it? well but eternal judgment follows upon ſin unrepented of. The pleaſures of ſin are momentany, but the Sorrow and torment for it continueth world without end. Therefore whatever men think now, they will one day confeſs, that nothing is gained by ſin.

Inform. 3. *Hence men that are under the Puniſhing hand of God, ought ſeriouſly to conſider what their ſins have bin.* Oftentimes (though not always for God afflicts his ſervants ſometimes not for ſin but for Tryal) the ſin is to be read in the Puniſhment, being written thereon in plain and Legible Characters. Therefore Men under Affliction ſhould ſearch for ſin. If a man be Afflicted in his Name, he ſhould conſider, have not I diſhonoured God's Name? Have not I laid

ſaid or done ſomething which has reflected much upon the Name of God? And if ſo, God may well ſuffer my name to be diſgraced. If he be afflicted in his outward eſtate, he ſhould Search his heart and wayes. and think ſadly with himſelf, have not I ſinned in reſpect of my eſtate? have not I been too cloſe and penurious, and my withholding more than was meet has tended unto poverty. Did I do good with my eſtate whilſt I enjoyed it? did I honour God with my Subſtance? Have I not abuſed Riches unto much Pride and vanity, and ſo provoked the Lord to take them from me? If he be afflicted in reſpect of his Children, It Concerns him to think with himſelf, have I diſcharged the duty God requires of me with reſpect to my Children? have I prayed for them in ſecret every day and night ſince they were born? Have I ſet an holy Example before them, that they may ſee by me how they ought to walk, and to pleaſe God? have my Children never ſeen me light and vain? Have I not been ſinfully indulgent towards them? Has not Chriſt had leſs of my heart and Love becauſe they have had ſo much of it? So as to publick Judgments, God has been blaſting the fruits of the earth from year to year, and have not people in this Land been very unfruitfull under the Goſpel and the ordinances of it? How was *New-England* afflicted by the late *Indian war*? and has not there been much ſin in reſpect of the Heathen

Heathen? Our *Indian trading houſes* have been a great ſcandal. Many of the *Indians* inſtead of being taught Chriſtianity, have learned much wickedneſs of the *Engliſh*. And therefore the juſt and Holy God hath moſt righteouſly puniſhed us by them. We have alſo been afflicted by Fires and fearful burnings which the Lord hath been provoked to ſend upon us? Alas! we need not ſearch here, for all the world knows that there have been ſinful fires kindled amongſt us, to the high diſhonour of God, and deep prejudice of the Intereſt of the Goſpel in this Place.

USE 2. Exhortation. *O beware of Sin.*

Conſider 1. *That God does ſometimes cauſe the ſins of men to be Retaliated upon them a long time after they have been Committed.*

No doubt but the cruel *Adonibezek* had cut off the Thumbs of ſeveral of his neighbours, a long time before he was ſerved ſo himſelf. If the providence of God doth not puniſh men preſently for their ſins, they are apt to Conclude that God hath forgotten what they have done; but they will find it otherwiſe. *Pſal.* 50. 21. *Theſe things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence, thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch an one as thy ſelf; but I will reprove thee and ſet them in order before thee.* Joſeph's brethern had a ſorrowful remembrance of their ſins, twenty years after they were

were Committed. It seemeth their conscience was asleep for a long time, but twenty years after it came upon them like a roaring Lion; and they cry out, *we have been verily guilty in that matter*. Nay, sometimes the providence of God does Retaliate the sins which men have bin guilty of, upon their posterity after them, *Job.* 21. 19. *God layeth up his iniquity for his Children; he rewardeth him and he shall know it.* Thus it was said concerning Ahab, *I will not bring the evil* (that is to say not all of it,) *in his dayes; but in his sons dayes I will bring the evil upon his house*. and then it came with a vengeance. It is a memorable passage which our English *Chronicles* mention concerning King *Richard the second* that when he was murdered in *Pomfret Castle*, after the mortal Blow was given him by the wicked Assassinates, He thus expressed himself, *My Great Grand-father K. Edward the second was in this manner Deposed Imprisoned, and murdered, by which meanes my Grand-father K. Edward the Third obtained the Crown: and now is the punishment of that injury come upon me who am his son and successour.*

Consid. 2. *As to temporal Judgments the Lord many times retaliates upon his own servants the evils which they have done.*

Therefore Christ said to his owne disciples, *With what Judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured unto*

unto you again. Matth. 7. 2. And we see this in *David*, he sinned hainously by breaking the seventh commandment, and God punished him after a most dreadfull manner by leaving his Children to become guilty of the like sins, to the infinite reproach of their Fathers Name and Family. *Jacob* sinned in putting a Cheat upon his own Father, making him believe that Jacob was Esau, & observe how the providence of God met with him in the like manner; for just so did his Uncle deceive him, making him beleeve that *Leah* was *Rachel*. Tho' it be most true that God pardons Sin to those that truly repent of it; Nevertheless he useth so to order things by his providence, as that the mark of his displeasure shall appear. I have read of one that fought a Duel, and killed him that was his Adversarie: Afterwards God by a strange providence brought him to unfeigned Repentance; yea, so as that he became a pattern of Mortification and Holiness; but this man died of bleeding, yea, bloud issued out of all parts of his body. One notes upon it, that tho' God forgave his sin, yet he took vengeance so far as to leave a mark of his displeasure on a *bloudy Dueller*. Thus the Lord dealeth with his own servants Therefore good men should walk in a holy fear lest they provoke the Most High to visit them with temporal Jndgments. *Let us stand in awe and not sin against GOD.*

Sins of Omission expose men to the Judgments of God.

Haggai. 1. 9.

Ye looked for much, and lo it came to little, and when you brought it home I did blow upon it: why, saith the Lord of hosts; Because of mine house which is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.

THe Scope of the Prophet in this Chapter, is to reprove the Jews for a sinful Neglect which they were guilty of, and to exhort them unto Reformation without delay. This Reproof and Exhortation was very seasonable: A word upon the wheel, well timed in more respects than one. It was so in respect of the publick state of affairs in the world: There being a new Emperour lately come to the Throne, who was ready to encourage them in that work which had been long and sinfully Neglected by them. It is said that

that in the ſecond year of *Darius* the word of the Lord came by *Haggai* the Prophet *ver.* 1. Some Hiſtorians and Chronologers ſuppoſe this *Darius* to be the ſon of *Eſther* and that he might from thence be the more reſpective unto the Jews, for that his mother was a *Jeweſs*: And no doubt but that he knew that God had puniſhed ſome of his predeceſſors, becauſe they had interrupted the building of the Temple, which might make him the more careful not to offend in that kind. This word was alſo ſeaſonable in reſpect of the time of the year when it was preached, *viz. in the ſixth moneth*, when the people ſhould have gathered in their Harveſt; but God had blaſted the fruits of the earth ſo that there was little to be gathered: Inſtead of the joy of harveſt, they had great Sorrow to ſee themſelves ſo ſadly diſappointed: The Prophet is therefore ſent to ſtrike whilſt the Iron is hot. A blow will make impreſſion on the hardeſt Iron if it be ſmitten whilſt the Iron is hot. Thus the Prophet ſtriking the iron hearts of the *Jews* with the Hammer of the word of God: juſt as they had been put into a furnace of divine Judgment, it made a deep impreſſion on them.

In the words before us, there are two things expreſſed.

1. The *Judgment* which theſe People were expoſed unto, viz. *Scarcity of food*; there were Threatnings and ſome beginnings of a Famine.

2. The Sin which was the procuring cause of that Judgment, viz. *Their negligence in Temple-work.* It was a judgment suited to the sin which they had been guilty of. They would not give God his due, and therefore He would not give them the outward blessings they desired. They neglected to take care that there should be meat in the Lords house: Therefore He would not fill their houses. They had disappointed God in his expectations concerning them, therefore He disappointed them in their expectations from him. They had puffed at serving God, as if every thing were too much for him; therefore He did Blow upon them, and blast all their labours. The words would afford unto us many usefull doctrines, but that which I chuse to insist on at present is,

DOCT. *That men are sometimes exposed unto the Judgments of God not only for doing that which is Evil, but for their neglect of Duty.* or That,

The Holy God does sometimes punish men for sins of Omission.

In the Doctrinal handling of this Truth, we shall only enquire into two Things.

1. what duties are they, the Neglect whereof does expose men to divine Judgment?

2. What Judgments they are exposed unto on the Account of those Neglects?

Quere.

Quere. 1. *What duties are they, the Neglect Whereof expose men to the Judgments of God?*

Answ. There are *moral duties*, and that both as to the first and second Table of the moral Law. which men cannot live in the Neglect of, without highly provoking the displeasure of God against themselves. There is moral Worship, which is commonly and fitly called *natural worship*, because if men understand any thing of the nature of God, they cannot but know that such Religious Worship is due unto Him. Prayer is a part of Natural Worship; and they that do omitt that great duty of prayer expose themselves to the Wrath of the eternal God. He will pour out his Wrath upon them that have not called upon his Name, *Psal.* 79. 6. The Sanctification of the Sabbath is also a part of Moral Worship. The moral Law requires that *one day in seven* should be Holy unto the Lord: And if men neglect to give unto God *a seventh part of their time*, they bring themselves under the lash of the Law. Nor have any sort of sinners been more remarkably exposed unto divine Judgment, than those who have neglected the due observation of the Lords Holy day, *Jer.* 17. 27. *If you will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire and it shall not be quenched.* Likewise there are moral duties which men owe one unto another. If they refuse to do that which is

Equal and juſt, they incurr divine diſpleaſure. Or if they neglect works of Mercy and Charity when called thereunto, the righteous God will certainly judge them for omiſſions of duty. *Jam.* 2. 13. *He ſhall have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy.* Or if the due execution of Judgment upon Offenders be omitted, The High and Holy God is provoaked againſt thoſe that have power to execute judgment, but do it not. *Eli*'s Family was ſubject to ruinating Judgments for Neglects of this nature. *I have told him* (ſayth God) *I will judge his houſe forever becauſe his Sons made themſelves vile, and he reſtraind them not.* 1. *Sam.* 3. 13, God took away the mercy of a Kingdom from *Saul*, becauſe he did not execute Judgment upon *Agag*. & *Ahab* loſt his life for a ſinful Omiſſion of the like ſort.

2. When men neglect *divine Inſtitutions*, they expoſe themſelves to the righteous judgments of an Holy God: Not only by omitting duties of moral but of Inſtituted Worſhip. My Text has reſpect unto ſuch Neglects. For the building of the Temple was not a part of Natural but of Inſtituted Worſhip. There is a ſevere and Holy Sanction added to *the ſecond Commandment*: The Lord therein declares, that He is a Jealous God; and will ſorely viſit for the breaches of that Commandment. Novv men break the ſecond commandment not only vvhen they admit of any *humane Inventions* in the worſhip of God, but when they Live in the Neglect

neglect of *divine Institutions*. When *Circumcision* was an ordinance, the neglecters of it were in danger of being cut off for their sin. *Gen.* 17. 14. The like is to be said Concerning the Passover, whilst that Continued to be a divine Institution *Numb.* 9. 13. *He that forbeareth to keep the Passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from his people, because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin*. The meaning is, God will Judge and punish him for that sin of Omission. In the dayes of the New Testament, *Baptism* and the *Lords supper* are *divine Institutions*, and therefore if men Content themselves to live without them, they incurr the displeasure of God, especially if they do so not meerly out of Weakness or Scruple of Conscience but (*Esau* like) out of Contempt and Profaneness of Spirit. The neglect of an Ordinance if so circumstanced is a damning sin.

3. When men omit *the great duties required in the Gospel* they expose themselves to the heavy Judgements of God. Yea, unto Judgements more Intolerable than those that came upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, *Matt.* 10. 15. Repentance towards God is one of the great Duties Commanded in the Gospel. *Now God Commands men every where to Repent*, And therefore by Impenitency they bring destroying Judgments upon themselves, as Christ said to the Jews, *except*

ye repent ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh, *Luk*. 13. 3. Eſpecially when men have had a long ſpace and much meanes afforded to them in order to bringing them unto Repentance *Rev*. 2. 21, 22. *I gave her ſpace to repent and ſhe repented not*, *Behold I will caſt her into a bed and them that commit adultry with her into great tribulation*, *except they repent of their deeds*. Great Tribulation in this world and greater in that which is to come, may they expect who have had a time to repent in, and many loud calls from Heaven thereunto, but they neglect and diſregard all.

And that men ſhould believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in order to ſalvation, is another great Duty required in the Goſpel. *This* (yea this above all) *is his Commandment*, *that ye Beleive in the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*. 1. *Joh*. 3. 23. And the truth is, a man cannot provoke God more nor bring greater judgment upon himſelf, than by Unbelief. When ſinners will go on in their Unbelief and Diſobedience to the Goſpell, the Lord in his wrath ſwears againſt them, that they ſhall never be ſaved. Hebr. 3. 18, 19. *To whom ſware he that they ſhould not enter into his reſt but to them that believed not*, *ſo we ſee that they could not enter in becauſe of unbelief*.

4. When men are very negligent as to *the manner of performing duty* they expoſe themſelves unto the Righteous Judgments of God. You know it is ſaid in *the third Commandment* that God

God will not hold that man guiltleſs who ſhall take his Name in vain. The meaning of which is, that God will ſurely, and ſeverely puniſh the *takers* of his Name in vain; Now they that are negligent as to the manner of perſorming Duty take the Lords Name *in vain*. A man may doe that which as to the *matter* of it is Duty, and yet bring a Curſe upon himſelf by his careleſs neglects as to the *manner* of Performance. *Curſed is he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently*. *Jer.* 48. 10. In *David*'s Time the Lords People ſought him, but becauſe *they did it not after the due order*, there was a ſad breach made upon them, a good and eminent man was taken away by a ſudden and awful ſtroke of God, as a ſign of His diſpleaſure, 1. *Chron.* 15. 13. In *Hezekiah*'s Time, the people came to the paſſover, which was their duty to do, but inaſmuch as they were *not cleanſed according to the purification of the Sanctuary h. e.* they were not ſo Cleanſed as thoſe that come into the Sanctuary ought to have been, they did not duly prepare their hearts, for ſo ſolemn an approach unto God, and becauſe they were ſinfully negligent as to the manner of Performing duty, ſore Sickneſs and mortality (be like the Plague.) ſuddenly broke in upon them, until good *Hezekiah*'s prayers prevailed with God for healing mercy. 2, *Chron.* 30. 19, 20. Thus the *Corinthians* as in duty they were

bound

bound observed that Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, but the Apostle said to them, 1. *Cor.* 11. 20. *this is not to eat the Lords Supper*; you come (saves Paul) to the Lords Supper after such an unworthy manner, that it is as if you did not eat there, so that you loose the benefit of the Ordinance; and not only so, but you eat and drink Judgment to your selves and for this very cause many of you are weak and sickly, and many are dead too, by that mortal disease, which a displeased God has sent amongst you, as a punishment for this Remisness in duty. And this was one special cause of those Judgments which befell the Jews after their deliverance out of Captivity in Babylon. In the prophet *Malachi's* Time they would offer Sacrifice; but *what manner of sacrifice?* they did offer the blind for sacrifice, and the lame and the sick, and polluted bread upon the Lords Altar, therefore did He send a curse upon them. If *dead services* are brought before the *living God*, they are a provocation to the eyes of his Glory: He will not accept of a Carcass of Religious duties, without that life, power, and Spirit which should fill them.

We come then to the second Enquiry *viz.*

Quere. 2. *What Judgments men are exposed unto on the account of Neglects of duty, or for sins of Omission?*

Answ. 1. *Unto Temporal Judgements.*

And

And when neglects of duty are general, ſo as that the body of a profeſſing people ſhall be found guilty thereof; publick Judgments are wont to follow: Sometimes bad harveſts, and that poverty and penury which is occaſioned thereby, are an effect of the Lords Controverſy for ſome general Neglects of duty as the inſtance in my Text and Context does plainly manifeſt. And therefore thoſe Judgments which are the natural cauſes of this Calamity, are ſent to awaken men out of their ſinful Neglects. *e. g.* That Judgment of Drought or want of Rain cometh as a puniſhment not only for the ſins of Commiſſion, but of Omiſſion. In the two next verſes to my Text the Lord by the prophet declares to his people; that ſyth they had neglected the building of his Houſe, *Therefore the heaven over you is ſtayed from dew, and the earth is ſtayed from her fruit. I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oyl, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.* And ſometimes God puniſheth the ſinful neglects of men by immoderate rains which may be intimated by that Scripture *Mal.* 2. 3. *Behold I will Corrupt your ſeed.* The great rains which ſometimes fall upon the earth, cauſe the ſeed to be corrupted in the ground, whence a Dearth follows.

Yea,

Yea, God does viſit his people with the ſword, and with Epidemical diſeaſes and other ſore Judgments becauſe of ſins of Omiſſion. *Moſes* was awfully ſenſible of this, that if the Children of Iſrael ſhould omit ſacrificeing to the Lord their God, He would *fall upon them with Peſtilence or with the Sword*. *Exod*. 5. 3. And the Prophet *Amos* ſhews the reaſon why the Lord had ſmitten them with Blaſting and Mildew, and had ſlain their young men with the Sword, was becauſe *they returned not unto him*, *Amos*. 4. Yea, thoſe Temporal Judgments which befal the Lords own ſervants, are moſt commonly for ſins of Omiſſion: Not for their doing that which has bin evil; but for their *not* doing that which is good. Eſpecially for their being neglective either in ſome part of inſtituted Worſhip, or elſe in the manner of performing duty. Thus when *Jacob* did from time to time delay his building an Altar for the Name of God, diſtreſſing afflictions came upon his Family on that account. And when *Moſes* deferred the Circumciſion of his Child longer than he ſhould have done *the Lord met him and ſought to kill him*. *Exod*. 4. 24.

2. *Spiritual Judgments are inflicted upon men for their Neglects of duty*. When the Lord does puniſh one ſin with another that's a ſpiritual

ſpiritual Judgment. And he does many times leave men unto ſins of Comiſſion as a ſpiritual Judgment upon them for their ſins of Omiſſion. *Pſal.* 81. 11, 12. *My People would* not *hearken to my voice, and Iſrael would* none *of me.* They were guilty of very ſinful Omiſſions & neglects of duty towards God, & what followed? A dreadful ſpiritual Judgment: For God therefore *gave them up to their own hearts luſts, and left them to walk in their own Councils.* Sin is it's own worſt puniſhment. God does never puniſh Sin more terribly than when he doth puniſh it with it ſelf. Yet he doth ſometimes for ſins of omiſſion leave men to the vileſt abominations in practice. The Apoſtle notes Concerning the Gentiles, *that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God neither were they thankful,* ------therefore ------- *God gave them up to uncleanneſs, and unto vile affections. Rom.* 1, 21. 24. Hence are the fearful Apoſtacies of ſome great Profeſſors of Religion. Men doe not uſe to caſt off all Religion at once, but firſt they grow more remiſs in duty. They begin to neglect ſecret Prayer, and then God is provoked at them: And to be avenged on them, He leaveth them to commit ſome enormous and very Scandalous Crime, whereby they get a grievous Wound to themſelves and a reproach that ſhall never be wiped away.

Nay,

Nay, when the Lords own ſervants are left to the Power of Temptation, Commonly it is to puniſh them for ſome neglect of duty. It may be they are grown remiſs in Prayer; and if ſo, they may fear that ſome great temptation is near at hand; It may be they will be left to commit ſome great ſin, the ſmart whereof ſhall bring them upon their knees, and make them *pray in Earneſt*. Or it may be they are become very remiſs as to their ſpiritual Watch: The reaſon of thoſe *horrendous Ship-wrecks* which eminent Saints have ſometimes been ſubject unto, has been becauſe they have not ſtood upon their Watch as they ought to have done. Good men if they be not watchful may be overtaken with very ſcandalous and ſhameful ſins, as a puniſhment for their Negligence. And other ſpiritual Judgments beſides thoſe mentioned are inflicted for ſins of Omiſſion: When God takes away the Means of Grace it is a Spiritual Judgment. And this cometh upon men becauſe they have not bin thankful and fruitful according to the Lord's righteous expectations from them. He taketh away his Goſpel and Ordinances, and beſtows them upon others that will bring forth better fruit, *Mat.* 21. 43. How often is it ſeen that when a People have enjoyed an Eminent Miniſtry, but have not duly prized that mercy nor profited by it, God in Judgment taketh away that Miniſtry from them, and it may be they

ſhall

shall never again enjoy the like to what once they had.

3. *There are some sins of Omission which expose them that live therein unto eternal Judgments.* The Moabites were shut out of the Congregation of the Lord forever on the account of a sin of Omission *Deut.* 23. 3, 4. So are the souls of men shut out of Heaven for such sins. *Saul* lost the Kingdom for a sinful Omission, 1. *Sam.* 15. 30. Many an Hypocrite (as *Saul* was) will be deprived of the Kingdom of Heaven, because he has pleased himself in some sinfull Neglect or other. Christ Jesus the Son of God will pronounce Sentence of Eternal Death upon Multitudes of men & women at the last & great day for their sins of Omission, He will not say to a reprobate world, Because you did imprison my servants, and impoverish them, and starve them: but because you did *not* visit them, and did *not* feed them, and did *not* cloathe them; therefore *Depart into everlasting fire. Mat.* 25. 42. Thus it will be when men shall live in the neglect of clearly commanded Duties, and that after Conviction. That the man goes with a convicted Conscience that he ought to pray with his Family, but he will not do it, and that he ought to pray in secret every day, but he will not do it; then woe to his soul for ever. They that live in the negect of those duties which are necessary and

Essential

eſſential to the Life of Religion, if they Perſiſt therein all their dayes they ſhall die for ever: And ſo ſhall they that *neglect* the great duties of the Goſpel, Faith Repentance and new obedience. How ſhall they eſcape eternal Wrath who *neglect ſo great ſalvation? Heb.* 2. 3. We proceed to make ſome improvement of the *Doctrine.*

USE. I. By way of inſtruction.

Inſtr. I. *Hence men under affliction, if they would know the reaſon of their afflictions, they ſhould examine themſelves concerning Omiſſions of duty,* whether they be not in thoſe reſpects found guilty before the Lord. *Eccleſ.* 7. 14. *In the day of adverſity conſider.* What ſhould a man then conſider? Let him conſider; what have I done that God has forbidden? And let him conſider too, *what have I not done?* Have I *not* neglected ſomething which God has commanded? Men under deep afflictions are ready to think with themſelves, what evil have I committed that ſhould provoke the Lord to deal thus bitterly with me? They cannot charge themſelves with any groſs or Scandalous ſin; and thence wonder at their afflictions, being at a loſs concerning the cauſe thereof. Whenas if they did conſider their neglects of duty, both as to matter and manner, they would wonder that they are no more afflicted. Has the Lord afflicted you by ſad bereavements in your Familes? Has

He

he killed your Children with death? It may be some of you have neglected Family dutyes; you have not prayed for and with your Children as you ought to have done. Or you have neglected to build Gods house; and therefore he does break and pull down your houses. If you suffer *the Lords house to ly waste*, He may well Threaten to make your Houses, your Families desolate.

Inform. II. *Hence there is just cause for us to Conclude that the judgements of God upon this Land have come as Punishments for sins of omission as well as for other evils.*

New England has bin bleeding under very awfull Judgments. At the first God did lightly Afflict the Land, but afterward more greivously. And behold his Anger is not turned away but his hand is stretched out still. This very year God has diminished our ordinary food in some places of the Countrey He has called for a Drought upon the mountaines and upon the Corn; The Heaven is stayed from Dew, and the Earth is stayed from her Fruit. In other places Immoderate Raines have fallen, and the flood has carried all away before it: *we looked for much, and lo it came to little.* Why has all this been? O there have been great Omissions; great and Generall Neglects of duty found among us. Let me Enquire in the fear of God

Quere. I. *Are not the weighty matters of the Law omitted?*

The Lord Jesus Christ makes mention of three particulars, which he calls the weighty matters of the Law, and complains that great professors and pretenders to Religion had omitted them all, viz. *JUDGMENT, MERCY, and FAITH*, *Mat.* 23. 23. Judgment, *h. e.* the due Execution of Justice is a weighty matter of the law But is not this omitted in a sad degree? There are many good and wholsome Laws established for the suppression of sin, but they are not duly executed; sinners are not punished as they ought to be, and as once they were in *New-England*: so then Judgment is omitted: And thats the Reason that sin and daring Prophaneness gets head, and is become exceeding bold amongst us. Time was when in *New-England* men durst not doe as now they dare. Time was when in *New-England* they durst not continue whole nights in Taverns, in drinking and gaming, and mispending their precious Time for which they must give a sad account to the Son of God at the last day. Time was when in the *Boston* men durst not be seen in Taverns after the Sabbath is begun. And how cometh it to pass that they are seen there now? but because *Judgment is Omitted*. And is not *Mercy* neglected too? Men hear that others are in misery

misery but they have no heart to pitty them. How few are there that abound in Acts of Charity and mercy so much as they ought and should doe? Yea and mercy to the souls of men is neglected. Men see their neighbours live in sin and know that if they continue a while longer in their present Condition, their immortal souls will be lost in the pit from whence there is no Redemption, and yet they do not do their Endeavour to prevent it before it be too late. And *Faith* is another weighty matter of the Law, that is *Fidelity* in keeping ones word. But how negligent are men in performing their promises? *New-England* does hear ill abroad in the world because there are so many amongst us (for whose sakes the whole Land suffers) that will Promise but not make due conscience to performe their Ingagements. they are Children in whom there is no Faith. And without doubt they that deal falsly in their Covenants with men, are not faithfull in the Covenant which they have made with God.

Quere. II. *Has not the worship of God been much neglected by multitudes in New-England?*

Publick attendance upon the worship of God is omitted by many: some that seldome hear a *sermon* on the *Lords day* much less on *Lecture dayes*. The bread of Heaven is falling round about their Tents, but they loath manna ac-

accounting it light bread, God has made the river of Life to run before their doors, but they will not ſo much as ſtep out of doors to drink of it. If you thus deſpiſe ſpiritual food; God may well deprive you of natural food; and you may wonder if He do not at laſt take away the bread and water by which our ſouls ſhould be refreſhed. And are not ſome *divine Inſtitutions* neglected by the moſt of men amongſt us at this day? Church Fellowſhip, and that Ordinance of the Lords ſupper are divine Inſtitutions, but how many are there that have lived in the neglect of them all their dayes? *Temple-work* is omitted. The deſign of our Fathers in their coming into this Wilderneſs, was to carry on Temple work; that they might build a *ſanctuary* for the Name of God and of Jeſus Chriſt in theſe utmoſt parts of the earth. And formerly almoſt all hands were at work to build God an Houſe: How did old and young ſet to it? The generality of People in moſt of the Towns in *New-England* were *Church members*, but how much otherwiſe is it now? There are many that if they can but get *Baptiſme for their Children*, (tho they never had any right unto it in the ſight of God) they look no further. Ah ſinful Generation! did your Fathers thus neglect the houſe of God? No, they had more grace and were of another ſpirit. Such Omiſſions in you that are the *Children of the Covenant* are

worſe and more ſinful than in any other perſons in the world. Your having obtained Baptiſme for your ſelves or your Children aggravates your ſin, and does heighten the Lords diſpleaſure againſt you; For by vertue of that Ordinance both you and your Children (as they ſhall be capable) are under obligations to *obſerve all things whatſoever Chriſt hath commanded*, *Mat*. 28. 18, 20. I know (and bleſſed be God for it) that in ſome places *Temple-work* is going forward, but it is generally Neglected by the Riſing generation. They mind the world and vanities of it; *they run every man to his own houſe*, but in the mean time *the houſe of the Lord lieth waſte*; therefore marvel not if when you looked for much it has come to little. Have not you done little towards building an houſe for God. When the Lords people were awakned by the Miniſtry of the Prophets to ſet upon Temple work in good earneſt; God ſoon removed his Judgments which for neglects of that kind they had been expoſed unto: as wee may ſee in *Zech*. 8. 10. *But before thoſe dayes h. e.* before the dayes wherein they did ſet upon building the Temple, *the hire for man and beaſt became nothing*. Both Man and Beaſt were put to labour, but all in vain becauſe of the curſe of God upon their labours. *neither was there any peace to him that went out or to him that came in becauſe of the affliction* --- The holy God permitted their evil neigh-

neighbors to work them much miſcheif; He let looſe the *Ammonites and Samaritans* who made great complaints to the Emperor againſt them; and that cauſed them no ſmall tronble; and all this that they might be awakend unto Temple-work. Well then, Obſerve whats ſaid *ver.* 11. *But now* (ſince you have ſet your hands to Gods work; and are reſolv'd to reform neglects of Duty,) *I will be unto the reſidue of this people as in former dayes ſaith the Lord of hoſts; For the ſeed ſhall be proſperous, the vine ſhall give her fruit, and the ground ſhall give her increaſe, and the heavens ſhall give their dew.* The meaning is, the Husband man ſhould peaceably follow his calling, nor ſhould flouds or ſtorms, or any hurtful thing annoy the fruits of the Earth, as it had been whilſt they did only mind there own houſes, and let the Houſe of the Lord lye waſte.

3. *Are there not neglects of duty in all Societies?*

Look into Churches, Diſcipline is not upheld with that power, and with that Love and Faithfulneſs as ought to be. Scandalous ſins are too often paſſed over without bearing a due Teſtimony againſt them. And there are ſome Evils that are indulged, which once would not have bin born. But Sin has got ſuch an head, and ſuch a multitude of *Patrons*, that they that would be glad to have ſome Evils reformed, can doe nothing

nothing elſe but mourn in ſecret places for them. Verily the neglect of diſcipline in the Churches of *Aſia* was the original procuring cauſe of thoſe judgments which at laſt proved their Ruin. And if we look into Families, is not duty neglected there? doe not ſome live without Family Prayer? The word of the Lord has told them that *God will pour out his fury upon the Families that call not on his Name*: but they are reſolved to venture that. And how many families are there that have not the Holy Scriptures read amongſt them every day? it is commonly reported that there are ſome Church-members, who (except it be upon the Sabbath day) let their Bibles lye by them all the week long. O horrid ſhame! Doe ſuch men *let the word of Chriſt dwell richly among them*, when their Families hear no more of it? And how is Family inſtruction neglected? It is to be feared that there are many children and ſervants, the blood of whoſe ſouls will be required at the hands of their parents or Maſters, who have ſuffered them to periſh for lack of knowledge.

USE II. Exhortation.

O beware of ſinful Omiſſions.

Conſider. 1. *That Sins of omiſſion are dangerous Evils.* There are (as was partly intimated before) ſome ſins of Omiſſion, that living therein is inconſiſtent with Salvation. The ſlothful

ſervant becauſe he neglected his duty, was caſt into outer & etenral darkneſs. So it will be: when men out of wicked ſloth, or for any carnall reaſon, ſhall refuſe to doe thoſe things, which their own Conſciences tell them God requireth of them. He that knew his maſters will and did it not, was beaten and that with many ſtripes. And when men live under the light of the Goſpel, and yet ſhall not Comply with all the great duties commanded therein, they cannot be ſaved. Therefore *John Baptiſt* ſaid *Every tree which bringeth forth not good fruit, is hewen down and caſt into the fire Mat.* 3. 10. Tremble at this you that have been unfruitfull trees all your dayes. It is not ſaid he that bringeth forth evil fruit; the man that bringeth forth fruits of profaneſs, drunkeneſs, ſwearing, lying, Unrighteouſneſs ſhall be caſt into the fire; thats paſt all doubt: but he that does not bring forth good fruit; he that does not bring forth fruits of Faith, and Repentance, and Holineſs in life and Converſation: What tho the man be a civil moral man, if he does not bring forth the fruits of Regeneration, when Death ſhall come with a black Axe and hew him down, his ſoul ſhall be caſt into the fire that never ſhall be quenched.

Conſider 2. *How comfortable it will be upon a Death-bed if a man can then truly ſay, that he has not been negligent, but faithful to his truſt.* When

Hezekiah

Hezekiah thought he lay a dying, the remembrance of this was comfortable unto him; *Lord, I have done that which was good in thy ſight.* And what rejoycing had the holy Apoſtle in his own ſoul as he perceived the time of his Departure was at hand, inaſmuch as he could ſay *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the Faith.* If a man can then ſay, I have improved my time well, I have been willing to take hold of opportunities to be doing good. I have glorified God on the earth, and according to my capacity endeavored to do good unto men: Happy that man that ever he was born, that can in ſincerity ſpeak thus when he comes to die.

Conſider 3. *Our time to be doing good is but ſhort.* Every mans opportunities to ſerve God and to promove his own ſalvation, or the good of others, will ſoon be gone. Remember the words of the Lord Jeſus *Joh.* 12. 35. *Yet a little while is the light with you, walk whilſt you have the light leſt darkneſs come upon you.* It is but a little while that the light of Life continueth. Doe what thou haſt to doe with all thy might, for there is no work in the Grave whither thou art going. Shortly thy body will be thrown into the dark Grave, and if thou haſt wholly neglected thy ſeaſon, thy ſoul will be caſt into the dungeon where there is blackneſs of darkneſs forever.

Time's

Time's Chariot is moving ſwiftly; thy life is flying away; O then up and be doing leſt Darkneſs come upon thee.

By way of Direction.

1. *Be humbled for ſins of Omiſſion.* Thoſe ſins which a man has truly repented of, and bin humbled for, he will not become guilty of them ſo much as formerly. O then be humbled for neglects of duty: The beſt of us have cauſe to be ſo. Remember the times paſt: remember the ſinful dayes of Unregeneracy: when you lived without Chriſt, and without God in the world, didſt not thou live many years, and nothing done for God all that time, but ſuffer'dſt his ſpirituall Temple to lie waſte? O how canſt thou remember this, and thy ſoul not be humbled within thee! Yea the beſt of us all has cauſe to be humbled in reſpect of Omiſſions of duty, and that too in our beſt times. Take us at the beſt, we come very much ſhort of what we ought to be and doe. An Eminent man of God, and as great a builder of the Lords Temple as any in the world in his time, was wont to make that prayer, *The Lord forgive my ſins of Omiſſion.*

2. *Beware of thoſe Evils from whence Neglects of duty uſually proceed.* e. g. Take heed of *Worldlyneſs*

Worldlyneſs. Inordinate love to the world was a great reaſon why the Jews neglected Temple-work. And why do men amongſt us neglect prayer and reading the Scriptures in their Families, and in their Cloſets, yea, and many publick opportunities for ſoul advantages too; but becauſe of their worldly Incumbrances? Again *Carnal Fears*, and a ſinful Baſhfulneſs have a great influence into mens neglects of duty. why don't they make a profeſſion of Religion? they are afraid they ſhall be accounted Hypocrites, or that ſome of their old vain companions will deride them. Why don't they pray in their Families? They are aſhamed! And why do they not publickly own the wayes of Chriſt? They are aſham'd to do that too. But O that ſuch perſons would think upon the words of Chriſt, Mar. 8. 38. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words, in this adultrous and ſinful Generation; of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.*

3. *Labour after Regenerating Grace.*

The tree muſt be good or elſe the fruit will not be good. *Oneſimus* before his Regeneration was unprofitable, but after he was Converted, *Paul* ſayth of him to *Philemon*, *Now he is profita-*

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profitable to thee and me. O then Cry unto God for a new heart. *If a real work of Grace be wrought in thy soul, thou canst not indulge thy self in the Commission of any known sin, nor yet in the* Ommission *of any known Duty.*

The

The Lord's servants whilst living in this world, have many Opportunities and Advantages to glorifie God which the Saints in Heaven have not.

Preached *August* 24, 1684.

Isai. 38. 18, 19.

For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

THese words were uttered by *Hezekiah* that excellent Prince of *Judah*, Concerning whom the Holy Ghost giveth this Testimony, that *among all the Kings of Judah, after him was none like him, nor any that were before him.*

The beginning of this Chapter giveth us an account of a sore fit of sickness whereby the life of this Holy man was endangered. In *ver.* 1. it is said *In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death.* *h. e.* he was visited with a disease in its own nature mortal: What that disease was, is not particularly mentioned; only we may gather from some circumstances of the Relation, that

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it was that which is commonly called the Plague or Peſtilence. We find that he was very deſirous (if God ſhould ſee meet) to live a while longer. The reaſon of his being ſo unwilling to dye at this time, is not expreſſed. To be ſure it was not any fears he had upon his ſpirit, with reſpect to his own ſpiritual and eternal eſtate. For his ſpirit and conſcience within him did bear witneſs for him, ſo as that when he lay upon his ſick bed, he could comfortably appeal to God concerning his ſincerity, as we ſee he did *ver.* 3. But at this time (tho after this ſickneſs God gave him children) *Hezekiah* had no ſon to ſucceed him on the Throne, ſo that had God taken him away, in all likelyhood his death would have occaſioned great trouble and diviſion amongſt the Lords people concerning his ſucceſſor; the thought whereof could not but be exceeding irkſome and grievous to the holy heart of ſo good a man as *Hezekiah* was: And that probably might be the reaſon of his unwillingneſs to die at this time. He therefore did (ſo fat as the violence of the diſeaſe would permit him) betake himſelfe to God by prayer, for the further prolongation of his life. And no doubt but that the prophet *Iſaiah*, and all the good men in *Jeruſalem* and through out all the Land of *Judah*, that had heard of his ſickneſs, were earneſt with the Lord for his Recovery. And God was pleaſed wonderfully (indeed miraculouſly)

miraculously) to answer prayer; so that within a few days *Hezekiah* had his health and strength again. He was not willing that so signal a mercy should be forgotten. And therefore upon his recovery, he drew up a written memorial of the Lords dealings with him, as we see in *ver.* 9. *The writing of Hezekiah King of Judah, when he had been sick and was recovered of his sickness.* This writing stands upon everlasting Record in the book of God. And the words now read are some part of it. Wherein *Hezekiah* declares two things.

1. *That the Grave and Death cannot praise God nor hope for his Truth.*

By the grave and death, we are to understand such as are in the grave; and that are under the state of death: Men that are dead and buried; wherefore it is explained by that expression, *they that go down into the pit*, *i. e.* into the pit of the Grave. And this is spoken not only of the wicked, whose souls go down into the pit of eternal darkness when their bodies go down into the pit of the grave, but of the faithful servants of God, who have walked before him in Truth and with a perfect heart, as *Hezekiah* had done: These when they are in the grave cannot Celebrate the Name of God with their bodies, nor yet with their souls, in such ways as those that are living upon earth may do.

2. *He declareth that* the living *should do as he did*

did, even praiſe the Lord.

And when he ſpeaketh of the living he doubles the word to make it the more Emphatical, *The living, the living*. *THEY* ſhall praiſe the Lord; the meaning is, they ought to do it, and they may do ſo; they have great opportunities and advantages to ſet forth the Praiſes, and to magnifie the Name of the Lord. Yea and thoſe that are *doubly* alive will do it. They whoſe ſouls as well as bodies are living; that have a life of grace as well as a life of nature, theſe ſhall and will improve their opportunities to glorifie God and to make known his Truth,

The Doctrine which the words afford unto us is, that

DOCT. *The Lords ſervants whilſt living in this world have many opportunities and advantages to glorifie God, which ſaints in Heaven have not.*

We ſhall here, 1. *premiſe* two *Propoſitions* for the clearing and right underſtanding of this doctrine. 2. Enquire what opportunities to glorifie God, his ſervants have whilſt living, which Saints in Heaven have not.

Propoſ. I. *Saints in Heaven glorifie God.*

They that live with him do alſo live to him. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſpeaking of *Abraham, Iſaac*, and *Jacob* ſayth, *they all live unto God, Luk.* 20. 38. The like is to be affirmed of all the Saints departed

departed out of this world in reſpect of their ſouls they live unto God. They that are beholding his face in glory ſerve him, and that continually. They ſerve him day and night in his Temple. *Rev.* 7. 15. and 22. 3, 4. They praiſe him and that after a far better manner than ever they did in this world. And therefore the words of *Hezekiah* in this text are not to be underſtood abſolutely, as if holy men when they die and goe to a better world, did ceaſe to praiſe the Lord. For in heaven Saints and Angels do joyn together in Tryumphant ſongs and everlaſting *Hallelujahs*, throughout the never-ending days of eternity. *Every Creature which is in Heaven* is ſaying *bleſſing and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever*, *Rev.* 5. 13. The Saints in Glory hear of things (tho not of all things (that are done upon the earth which they do rejoyce and praiſe God for, *Rev.* 18. 20. *Rejoyce over her thou heaven and ye holy apoſtles and prophets*. When *Rome* ſhall be made an utter deſolation, the holy Apoſtles and Prophets, and other Saints in Heaven will hear of it and bleſs God for it. Yea, and when ſinners on earth are converted, the Inhabitants of the third Heaven know it, and praiſe the Lord. *There is joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth*, *Luk.* 15. 7.

Propoſ. II. *When a man dieth his working time is at an end.*

There is no work in the grave *Eccleſ.* 9. 10. The grave can do no work for God; death can not celebrate him. They that have wrought moſt for God, ſhall doe no more for him in this world after death. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſaid not many hours before his death *I have glorified God on ye earth, I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to doe, Joh.* 17. 4. I am apt to think, the next unto Chriſt, the Apoſtle *Paul* did more for God than ever any other man did. One ſaith of him *He was in his own thoughts the leaſt Saint on earth, he is in my thoughts the higheſt Saint in heaven.* But ſince he has been in his grave he has done nothing as to thoſe ſervices for God, which he was wont to attend whilſt in this world. When the time of his departure came, his courſe was finiſhed, 2. *Tim.* 4. 7. Not that the Saints in glory are idle, or no wayes employed, but they are not improved in ſuch ſervices as whilſt in this world they were called to attend. In heaven, Miniſters ſhall preach no more, ſtudy no more, write no more. People ſhall hear ſermons and attend private meetings for Religious exerciſes no more. *---the dead which die in the Lord --- reſt from their labours, and their works follow them, Rev.* 14. 13. The work which ſaints in Heaven are doing is not *labour* properly, they find no difficulty in it. The

earth

earth is the place where they must doe their work; Heaven is the place where they shall receive their reward, therefore it is said *their works follow them i. e.* the reward of their works This consideration made one of the *Martyrs* somewhat loath to die: For (said he) *I am now going to a place where I shall alwais be receiving from God, but shall do no work for him any more.*

We now proceed to Enquire

What advantages to glorifie God have his servants whilst living in this world, which Saints in Heaven have not?

Ans. *The Lords servants whilst in this world sustain several Relations, by meanes whereof they are capacitated to serve and glorifie God; all which relations cease in Heaven.* If a man shall fill up the Duties of place and Relation sustained by him, God will be glorified. Now this is propef to Saints on earth: Especially they that stand in a Paternal relation unto others, have upon that account peculiar advantages to promote the praise and glory of God. This is intimated in the Text, *The father to the children shall make known thy truth.* There are several sorts of Fathers mentioned in the Scripture, all which have great advantages to glorifie God by endeavouring the good of their Children. There are *Political Fathers:* Rulers in the Common Wealth are so styled.

It was ſaid of *Eliakim* that he ſhould be a *Father* to the Inhabitants of Jeruſalem. *Iſai.* 22. 21. Such Fathers are advantaged to doe much for God. They may ſuppreſs and reform thoſe things whereby God is diſhonoured: Such a Father did Hezekiah approve himſelf to be fourteen year before this ſickneſs came upon him, and fifteen year after that: He was the greateſt *Reformer* in the world: He ſet himſelf with all his might to oppoſe the reigning ſins of the Times. And they that are political Fathers have great advantages to honour God, by the Countenancing of his publick Worſhip, and by Encourageing the ſincere profeſſors of the Truth. Thus alſo Hezekiah did, 2. *Chorn*, 31. 2, 20, 21. Now he was ſenſible that after he ſhould be in his grave, he could thus ſerve and honour God no more amongſt his people in this world. There are alſo *Spiritual Fathers*: The Miniſters of God are called *Fathers* in the Scripture; Eſpecially ſuch as have been by their labours in the Goſpel inſtrumental in the Regeneration of immortal ſouls. Hence the Apoſtle ſaid 1. *Cor* 4. 15. *you have not many fathers for in Chriſt Jeſus I have begotten you through the Goſpel*, And there are no men in the world that have greater opportunities to glorifie God than they have, becauſe their whole work is that wherein one way or other the eternal ſalvation of the immortal ſouls of men is concerned. If but

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one ſoul is converted God has much glory thereby, *Jam.* 5. 10. *He that converteth a ſinner from the evil of his way, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins.* How much glory then comes to the Name of God when many ſinners are converted? So when ſouls of Converted ones are further built up in knowledge and in holineſs, God hath much glory thereby. It is noted Concerning that eminent Miniſter of God *Jehoiada*, That the people buried him after a moſt honourable manner, *becauſe he had done good both towards God and towards his houſe*, 2. *Chron.* 24. 16. They that have been eminently inſtrumental in the Converſion or Edification of the ſouls of the Lords People, *have done good in Iſrael both towards God and towards his houſe*. They have done good towards God by being inſtrumental in building up his houſe, to the praiſe and glory of his Name forever. There are alſo *Domeſtical Fathers*: Maſters of Families may glorifie God by making their Families to become Religious. *Abraham* did honour God not only by his Faith but by his Faithfulneſs in taking care that his Houſhould after him might keep the way of the Lord. Eſpecially parents have a peculiar advantage put into their hands to promote the glory of God, by bringing up their Children for him: God accepts that as a great ſervice for his Name & will certainly reward it. As *Pharaoh's*

daughter said to the mother of Moses *Nurse this child for me and I will give thee thy wages*, *Exod.* 2. 9. So does the Lord say to every Father and Mother, bring up thy children for me, bring them up in the nurture and Admonition of the Lord, & I will give thee thy wages. And indeed, God useth to make the faithful Endeavours of Parents effectual & successful to his own praise. There is many a Child that if he must tell how he came to be converted, he must say my Father under God was the cause of it. So that Saints on earth may cause Religion to be propagated, that when they are praising God in Heaven, their children shall be glorifying of his Name here below: Whenas the Saints in Heaven can doe nothing of all this, since all earthly Relations cease there. There is no Magistracy, no Ministry, no particular Families in Heaven, as it is in this world.

2. *The servants of God whilest in this world may endeavour the enlargment of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.*

It tends much to the honour of God, when the Kingdom of his son Jesus Christ is increased. Now this *the living*, *the living*, may be instrumental in, and that in manifold respects which I shall not enlarge upon. There is an internal invisible Kingdom of Christ in the hearts and souls of men: that which is called *the kingdom of grace*; when not sin but grace prevails in the

heart

heart, the Lord Christ reigns there, *The Kingdome of God is in righteousness, and peace, and joy of the Holy Ghost, Rom.* 14. 17. Living Saints may be helpful in the enlargement of this Kingdom, by endeavouring to obtain more Grace in their own souls. When Christians grow in grace, the Kingdom of Christ is increased thereby, and God is glorified. The more Grace anny man has, the more careful will he be to please God and to live to his glory. But after a Christian is dead, he shall grow in grace no more: he is then come to his perfection. The spirits of just men in glory are made perfect *Heb.* 12. 23. All their spiritual Conflicts and Contests are then over. When in a regenerate man there is a Conflict between grace and corruption, and grace gets the upper hand; God is honoured by those blessed Conquests. But there is nothing of this in Heaven: The Saints there cannot honour God by fighting against Sin his worst enemy. Also when a sinner is converted, the Kingdom of Christ is increased: For then a soul is brought out of Satan's into Christ's Kingdom, *Col* 1. 13. The Devil looseth a subject and Christ gains one, when a sinner is Converted. Yea and when Beleevers are further edified, and built up in their most holy Faith, Christs Kingdom is increased. Now they are not dead but living Saints, not Saints in Heaven but Saints on earth that have advan-

advantages to promote the conversion and edification of souls. Again, there is the external visible Kingdom of Christ; this, living Saints may be instrumental in the enlargement of, *viz.* by a professed subjection to the Gospel and the order of it; by owning the Churches of Christ themselves, and endeavouring that others may do so too. It tends much to the honour of God, when Beleevers do visibly and publickly before all the world, own the wayes of Christ. But thus to do is peculiar to the Saints on earth and not in Heaven.

3. *Living Saints may become witnesses to his Truth.*

They may make known the great Truths of the Gospel to those that have not been savingly aquainted therewith. In that respect Saints on earth are advantaged above those in Heaven. And without doubt the Angels in Heaven would count it a great happiness, if they might be Improved in such services. How happy then are *the living, the living!* They may declare God's Faithfulness in fulfilling his promises, whereby his Name has Glory. Thus *Hezekiah, the living shall make known thy truth.* God had promised to recover him from sickness; and he made good that promise: This truth would *Hezekiah* as long as he lived be making known, that so Gods Name might have glory: Moreover the living may testifie against sin, and in

that reſpect bear witneſs to the truth. They may refute errors in Judgment, and ſo vindicate the truths of God to the honour of his Name. Chriſt did confute the errors of the Phariſees and of the Sadduces proving by clear and unanſwerable Arguments that they did greatly err, *Mar.* 12. 27. And the great Apoſtle wrote epiſtles (Eſpecially thoſe to the *Romans* and to the *Galatians*) in Confutation of the prevailing errors of thoſe Times. Living Saints alſo, may bear witneſs againſt evils in Practice: they may reprove the ſins of men; and thereby prevent many a ſin from being Commited, whereby the Name of God would have been diſhonoured. Now Saints in Heaven can do none of theſe things: If they ſhould have a deſire to return into this world, that ſo they might declare the truths of God, and endeavour thereby to prevent the Damnation of immortal ſouls, they cannot return hither. Abraham ſaid to Dives *there is a great gulf fixed, ſo that they which would paſs from hence to you cannot*, *Luk.* 16. 26. When once a mans ſoul is out of his body he ſhoots the Gulf He is fixed down in an eternal eſtate and place from whence he cannot paſs. And the grave is called *the place of ſilence*, *Pſal.* 115. 17. When once a man is dead he ſhall never ſpeak a word for God in this world any more.

Fourthly

4. *Living Saints may glorifie God by an exemplary Converſation.*

Examples are of mighty force to doe either good or evil according as the example is. An holy example is that whereby others are drawn into a love and liking of the wayes of God, ſo as to ſpeak honourably of his Name, *Mat.* 5. 16. when children carry it as they ſhould do, men Commend their father; ſay they that Child has a good Father, who has inſtructed him well. So when the Children of God are of an holy and exemplary Converſation, it maketh others to have high thoughts of the Name of God. This convinceth the world that the Lord is an *Holy God*. If godly men who are made partakers of the divine Nature, are ſo righteous in their wayes, if ſin be ſo hateful to them, it muſt needs be concluded that God is an *Holy God*, and that he doth hate ſin with an infinite hatred. Yea, the holy example of thoſe that live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, is ſometimes ſanctified, ſo as to be the meanes of Converſion to them that behold it. Hence the Apoſtle ſpeaketh as in 1. *Pet.* 3. 1, 2. *Likewiſe you wives be in ſubjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word they alſo may without the word be won by the converſation of the wives, while they behold your chaſt converſation coupled with fear.* The holy converſation of the wife may win the husband. ſo as that he alſo ſhall become Religious. And the Exemplary converſation

Converſation of the husband may gain the wife. And the example of one godly child in a Family may be a means of ſaving good unto others. Eſpecially the good example of thoſe that are the Heads of families has oftentimes an happy influence upon all the Family. Now they that are in Heaven cannot come from thence, to ſhew by their example, how men in this world ought to walk and to pleaſe God.

5. *The Lords ſervants whilſt in this world, have opportunities to exerciſe ſome Graces of his Holy Spirit, which cannot be ſaid of them that are in Heaven.* *e. g.* Some Acts of Faith, whereby they give glory to God, *Rom.* 4. 20. But after death the faith of a Beleever is never put to it more: he meets with no Temptations to exerciſe his faith in Heaven: Indeed the Saints there, beleeve the reſurrection of their bodyes, and that they ſhall be forever in their happy eſtate, they cannot doubt of it, ſo that their Faith is not exerciſed as in this world. Here they live by Faith, but there they live by Sight. Yea, and many Acts of Charity, only they that are living in this world are in a capacity of exerciſing: Such as praying with thoſe that need prayer, relieving them that are in diſtreſs &c. whenas there are none in Heaven that need prayer or any relief. And that Grace of *Godly ſorrow*, only Saints living on earth are capable thereof. They only mourn for ſin, and mourn after

after Christ, *Psal.* 6. 5. *In the grave there is no remembrance of thee.* There is no penitential remembrance of God in the grave. Nor any sorrow (which is also a godly sorrow) for the Afflictions of the Church on earth. It is reported concerning the great *Nazianzen* that he was unwilling to die, because after his being in Heaven he should mourn no more for the afflictions of the Lords people in this world. Again, a Christian may glorifie God by the exercising of that grace of Patience, which doubtless is the reason of that strange expression & exhortation of the Apostle, *Jam.* 1. 2. *Count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations.* When temptations, yea diverse sorts of temptations overtake you, nay when you *fall* into them, when you are suddenly surprised with them; count it joy, and *all joy*: why? because then you have a mighty opportunity to exercise grace, and especially the grace of Patience. Now among the Saints in Heaven that grace is not exercised, inasmuch as there is no affliction *there*.

6. *The Lords servants whilst in this world may suffer for his Name.*

Now as it is a great honour to be a sufferer in a good cause; (*Phil.* 1. 29, *unto you it is given not only to beleeve but to suffer.* Every Christian must not be so honoured, as to be called forth to be a *Champion* for Christ, to suf-

fer

ſuffer, and it may be to die for his bleſſed Name and Truth:) ſo they who do ſuffer becauſe they have witneſſed a good Confeſſion, do greatly honour the Name of God. *Samſon*, at and by his death, did more ſervice for, and brought more glory to God, than by all his Life before. So a Chriſtian by ſuffering may bring more glory to the Name of God in one day, then he hath done in all his life before, tho it may be he hath been many years very active for God. It was ſaid of *Peter* that *by his death he ſhould glorifie God*, *Joh.* 21. 19. Now he died a *Martyr*: Eccleſiaſtical Story informs us that he was Crucified to death. But the Saints in Heaven are not capable of thus glorifying the Name of God. In the Heavenly, Jeruſalem there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow nor any pain.

SERMON II. Preached Septemb. 7 1684.

USE I. By way of Information.

1. *Hence the Lords ſervants ought not inordinately to deſire death.* For then they deſire that which will put an end to all their opportunities of Doing or Suffering for the bleſſed Name of God. It is true, that they who have an intereſt in Chriſt ſhould be willing to dye.

Simeon

Simeon when he had Chriſt in his arms ſaid, *now Lord let thy ſervant depart in peace*, *Luk.* 2. 29. ſo they that have embraced Chriſt with the arms of Faith ſhould be willing to depart this Life; but their willingneſs muſt be with an holy ſubmiſſion to the will of God. A willingneſs to dye, and an inordinate deſire after death are not the ſame: The former is a duty, incaſe; the latter is always ſinful. And yet the Lords own ſervants are ſometimes ſubject unto this evil: Eſpecially when they meet with great afflictions and ſorrows in the world, they have paſſionately deſired death: Whenas if the Lord had granted their deſires at that time it would not have been ſo well for them, nor would they have had ſo much glory in heaven as now they have. *Moſes* when he found the burden of that great Congregation too heavy for him, he could have been glad to be out of the world, that ſo he might be rid of his heavy burden: See how he expreſſes himſelf *Numb.* 11. 14, .15. *I am not able to bear all this people alone, becauſe it is to heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me I pray thee out of hand, ---- and let me not ſee my wretchedneſs.* One well obſerves that if Moſes had then died according to his owne deſire, he would have loſt the advantage of above thirty years ſervice for God and his people; and conſequently his glory in Heaven would not have been near ſo great as now it is. And the pro-

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prophet *Elijah* when he was tyred out with the perſecutions which in the world he was ſubject unto, *he requeſted for himſelf that he might dye, and ſaid it is enough, now O Lord take away my life, for I am not better then my fathers* 1. *Kin.* 19. 4. By this we ſee the truth of the word of *James* that *Elijah was a man ſubject to the like paſſions as we are*. And holy *Job* tho a pattern of patience yet did too impatiently long for death, O (ſaid he) *that I might have my requeſt! & that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would pleaſe God to deſtroy me; & that he would let looſe his hand and cut me off. Chapt.* 6. *ver.* 8, 9. Had Job's requeſt been granted, he had loſt many great opportunities of ſervice for God, which afterwards he was bleſſed with. And therefore whatever our afflictions may be, we ſhould take heed of Inordinacy in deſires to be out of the world. we don't know but that God may remove theſe afflictions, and give us cauſe and opportunities yet to praiſe him. When our work is done, when wee can doe and ſuffer no more for God and for Jeſus Chriſt, then let us long for death: And in the mean time let us be willing to live as long as God would have us:

Inſtruct. II. *Hence men ought to uſe meanes for the Continuance, and lengthening out of their own lives.*

Becauſe as long as they have life they have advantages

advantages to be doing ſomething or other for God. We ought to ſeek after opportunities to glorifie God, and therefore to reſpect the preſervation of our lives, without which we could not have thoſe opportunities. Natural meanes ought to be uſed for the preſervation of life and health. When *Hezekiah* was ſick he uſed naturall means in order to his own recovery; and that by the direction of the prophet *Iſaiah*, who ſaid, *Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaiſter upon the boil, and he ſhall recover. Iſa.* 38. 21. Now it is a known thing that Figs have a natural virtue in them to ripen and diſſolve ſwellings that are accompanied with any malignity. By this then God inſtructs men that they ſhould not neglect the meanes conducing towards their own healths; If they do, they will be found guilty of breaking the ſixth Commandment. Alſo *moral* as well as *natural* meanes ought to be uſed for that end.

To inſtance in three particulars here.

1. Men ſhould be careful to walk in the fear of God: For the Scripture ſaith that tends unto life. *Prov.* 19, 23. And ſpiritual wiſdome which conſiſts in the true fear of God, cauſeth days to be multiplied *Prov.* 9. 10. 11. *The fear of the Lord prolongeth dayes, Prov.* 10 27.

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As men by their ſins do oftentimes either bring killing diſeaſes upon themſelves, or provoke the Lord in ſome other way to cut off their lives before they have lived out halfe their dayes: *Pſal.* 35. 23. By being *overmuch wicked* -- they *die before* their *time*. *Eccl.* 7. 17. So when a man has a principle of the fear of God in his heart, he will have a great reſpect unto all Gods Commands, and thats a ſure way for a man to have his life continued, ſo long as it ſhall be good for him to live *Prov.* 2. 1, 2. *Let thine heart keep my Commandments, for length of days and long life, and peace ſhall they add to thee.*

2. *Men ſhould pray for the continuance of their own lives, ſo far as ſhall be for the glory of God.*

Indeed they ought to pray for others, eſpecially for thoſe that have great opportunities and an heart to improve them, that their lives may be lengthned out to the Lords praiſe and glory. Sure then they ſhould pray for their own lives. Thus did *Hezekiah*; When he was deadly ſick, *He turned his face towards the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and ſaid, Remember now O Lord I beſeech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart and have done that which is good in thy ſight: &c.* There was a great argument in that petition: God has bin glorified by my life hitherto; and therefore if he will ſpare my life, more glory ſhall yet redound to his

blessed Name thereby. *Isai.* 38. 1. 2, 3. And after the prophet had told him y God would add to his dayes fifteen years, he did not only pray but believe that it would be so *ver.* 16. *O Lord by these things* (by Faith in the promises) *men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.* *David* also Prayed for the preservation of his own life which was oft in danger. *Psal.* 42. 8. *my prayer is unto the God of my life.* And sometimes his desires for the lengthening out of his own life, were the prayer of Faith, *Psal.* 118. 17, 18. *I shall not die but live, and declare the workes of the Lord: the Lord hath chastned me sore but he hath not given me over unto death.* Which may probably be hinted at by the Apostle in *Heb.* 11. 34. where he speaketh of some that *by Faith out of weakness were made strong*: Belike he has respect unto *Hezekiah* and *David* who had been subject to sore sickness and thereby made very weak, but the prayer of Faith caused health and strength to return to them again. And the Pen-man of the hundred and second Psalm ('tis by some supposed that the prophet *Daniel* wrote it) prayed for the continuance of life: *ver.* 23. 24. *He weakned my strength in the way, I said O my God take me not away in the midst of my dayes; thy years are throughout all generations.* Says the Psalmist I have but a moment to be in this world in comparison of thy Eternity;

and

and wilt thou ſhorten and deprive me of that little moment?

3 *Men ſhould be thankful to God for life.*

Pſalm. 42. 11. *I ſhall yet praiſe him who is the health of my countenance and my God.* His meaning is, that he ſhould ſtill live; and if he did live he would be ſure to praiſe the God of his Life. *Pſal.* 119. 175. *Let my ſoul live and it ſhall praiſe thee.* —— And if the living have advantages to glorifie God: then certainly they have great cauſe to be thankful for life. *The living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee, as I do this day.* Tho a man bee ſubject to many afflictions, nevertheleſs if he be living ſtill let him praiſe the Lord. It is ſaid *Wherefore doth the living man complain ——?* *Lam.* 3. 39. If you are in the Land of the living, you have no reaſon to complain againſt God, but to praiſe him: All the living have ſo: For Life is in it ſelf a bleſſing; and is mentioned in the Scripture as ſuch, *Pſal.* 91. 16. *With long life will I Satiſfie him, and ſhew him my ſalvation.* Therefore praiſe is due unto God for this mercy, eſpecially conſidering that we have forfeited our lives ten thouſand thouſand times. Unregenerate men have cauſe to be thankful to the Lord for the continuance of their lives, becauſe *to him that is joyned to the living there is hope.* It is poſſible that they may yet repent, and obtain an

intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt that ſo their ſouls may be ſaved. Indeed when once life is gone, then there is no hope, as *Hezekiah* here ſpeaks, *they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth*: but ſince thou art yet alive there is ſome hope for thee; eſpecially if thou haſt an heart to ſeek unto God for Grace. And true believers on Chriſt (ſuch as *Hezekiah* was) have cauſe to bleſs God for life: and moſt of all if they be ſuch as have great opportunities to ſerve and glorifie God. Oh be thankful unto God for life. This is one end which God ayms at in preſerving the lives of his ſervants, when in eminent danger of death, it is that he might have praiſes from them *Pſal.* 30. 3. *O Lord thou haſt brought up my ſoul from the grave, thou haſt kept me alive that I ſhould not go down into the pit.* Why did the Lord doe this? *To the end that my glory may ſing praiſe to thee and not be ſilent. O Lord my God I will give thanks unto thee forever. ver.* 12. And this is the way to have life preſerved. God delights to beſtow his bleſſings upon thankful Receivers.

USE. II. for Caution,

Let us take heed that we do not abuſe this truth ſo as to encourage our ſelves in an inordinate deſire of Life in this world.

Some indeed are inordinately deſirous of death;

thats

that's an evil (as has been shewed;) but the most of men err on the other hand, by an extraordinary desire of life: They are not willing to die when God would have them. Men desire life *inordinately*

1. *When the cheif motives upon which they ground their desires are not spiritual but carnal.*

The *doctrine* which I am upon shews us what we should desire life for. *viz.* that so we may do service for God and glorifie his Name; and therefore if God has no more use for our lives, we should desire them no longer. Whenas men generally desire to continue in this world not for Gods sake but for their own. The comforts of this life are sweet to them, and thence they are in no wise willing to leave them: They can't endure to think of going from their estates, Relations, Chidren, &c. They would live that so they may add to their estates and grow rich in the world, or that they may enjoy earthly pleasures. One of the Emperours was loath to die because then he should see merry dayes amongst his Consorts no more. *O my soul* (said he) *nec solitos dabis jocos* thou shalt never Joke & be merry more. And another when he beheld most pleasant & delightful Accomodations said *Hæc nos invitos mori faciunt* these are the things which make us unwilling to die,

2. *The a man should desire life for spiritual ends,*

if he does not ſubmit his deſires to the will of God, they are Inordinate; He may, and ſhould deſire to live longer in the world that ſo he may ſerve God, yet if God ſay I will have no more ſervice from thee, I have made as much uſe of thee as I think meet to do then it becomes him to ſubmit to the will of the Moſt High: Such a gracious frame was *David* brought unto, 2. *Sam.* 15. 25, 26. *If I ſhall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and ſhew me both it and his Habitation; But if he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good unto him.* If (ſaith David) God intends to make any more uſe of me amongſt his people, he will ſave me out of my preſent danger; but if he ſees not meet to favour me ſo farr; if he will lay me aſide as a broken veſſel wherein he will have no pleaſure, I am willing to be at his diſpoſal. But when deſires of life (let the ground of them be whatever may be) are *immoderate*, then they become ſinful. It becomes a Chriſtian to ſay as for my life I leave it with God; I put it into his hands, let him do what he will with it: If God ſhould refer that matter of the continuance of my life to me, I would refer it to him again. Let me then back this uſe of *Caution* againſt inordinacy of deſires after Life, with two or three *Conſiderations*.

Conſider. 1. That *willingneſs to part with life*

is sometimes a signe of grace.

So 'tis when there is a willingness to die for Christ's sake. As it was with the holy Apostle *Act.* 21. 13. *I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus.* Or if a man be willing to die that so he may be with Christ as the same Apostle was, he had *a desire to depart that he might be with Christ*, *Phil.* 1. 23. Or if a man be willing to die that so he may be wholly free'd from sin, then there is Grace in his soul, which makes him to hate sin more then death it self.

Consider. 2. *They that are Christians indeed, so long as they live in this world, shall meet with difficulties and Temptations.*

They will find this present world to be to them an *evil world*, *Gal.* 1. 4. And they that are most faithful to Gods interest doe usually meet with more trouble in the world then other men; So that if their happiness were in this life only *of all men they would be the most miserable.* Do not you find trouble enough in the world to wean you from it, and to make life the less desirable? Have you not burdens? And you will never be rid of those burdens so long as you live in this world, 2. *Cor.* 5. 4. *We that are in this Tabernacle do groan being burdened.* As long as your immortal souls are confined to these mortal bodies you must expect burdens of one kind or another. This should make us the more

willing to ſubmit to the will of God as to the time of our departure from hence.

Conſider. 3. *They that die in Chriſt ſhall gain by Death*,

Rev. 14. 13. *Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord.* And they are never perfectly bleſſed until then; tho as to their ſtate they are bleſſed before: For *Bleſſed is the man whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven and whoſe ſin is covered.* Nevertheleſs there is not an actual fruition of all Bleſſedneſs before death: but then it is obtained by every true believer on Jeſus Chriſt. The Apoſtle ſaid *for to me to live is Chriſt*, He was willing to live that ſo he might do ſervice for Chriſt; he was alſo willing to die, therefore he adds *to die is gaine*, *Phil.* 1. 21. And that which St. *Paul* ſaith concerning himſelf reſpecting his death being gainful to him, is true of all ſincere Chriſtians. And what do they gain at their death? Verily that which is better and infinitely more deſirable then all this worlds gain: They gain an happy deliverance from all their ſorrows, and from all ſin too. *Rom.* 6. 7. *He that is dead is freed from ſin.* The Beleever after death ſhall never have ſo much as one ſinful or vain thought in his heart throughout the days of Eternity: And he gains a *Bleſſed ſight* of Chriſt in all his glory forever. Now what man that ſhall gain this will be unwilling to die, if his work be done, and God ſhall ſee meet to call him

him hence.

USE. 3. *Let the living, yea the living be exhorted to improve their opportunities ſo as ſhall be to the praiſe and glory of God.*

Through the tender mercy of God, I that ſpeak to you this day am yet living, And you to whom I ſpeak in the Name of the Lord are Living: As long as we are *living*, yea as long as we are *living* let us improve our opportunities for God.

Conſider. 1. *We have all opportunities to glorifie God.*

'Tis true that ſome have greater opportunities then others have. In the parable concerning the Talents, One man had five Talents committed unto him, another had two, another had but one: So there are ſome that have five times the advantage to do ſervice for God and for Jeſus Chriſt that others have. Fathers have uſually a greater opportunity then Children to be ſerving God and promoting his intereſt and glory. And they that are in a publick, have greater advantages then thoſe that are in a private Capacity. O how much may a Magiſtrate doe for God! And how much may a Miniſter doe for God if they lay themſelves out to the utmoſt for him! Yea, they that do in the Loweſt Capacity ſerve the publick, *Conſtables, Tything men* and the moſt inferior Officers may do great ſervice for God. They may be inſtrumental

to

to prevent a world of ſin and diſhonour to the Name of God: They may doe that ſervice for him now, which he will reward with Eternal glory at the laſt day. And they whom the Lord has bleſſed with eſtates above others, have in that reſpect a ſpecial advantage put into their hands, to ſerve God if they have but an heart to make uſe of it accordingly. Alſo they that have ſpiritual gifts & endowments above others; that have natural and acquired parts in a degree of eminency, have ſpecial advantages put into their hands to become inſtrumental unto Gods glory. Yea all others whilſt living have advantages thereunto. Have you not received many mercies for body and ſoul? be thankfull unto God for them and then you will glorifie his Name. Do you not enjoy ſ meanes of grace? Have you not many opportunities for the ſaving good of your ſouls? Improve all; grow in grace under all; and God will have glory from you and by you. They that are old and ſtricken in years yet may glorifie God, *Pſalm.* 92. 14. *They ſhall bring forth fruit in old age*. You that are old diſciples, if you are much in prayer, if you bring forth the fruits of righteouſneſs, that will be to the praiſe and glory of God. Know you not that *Jehoiada* did a great deal of ſervice for God after he was a very old man? And ſo did *Anna* after ſhe was above fourſcore years old. And you that are young may glorifie God

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alſo. Have you never read of Children ſaying *Hoſannah* to the Lord? And that *out of the mouthes of babes and ſucklings he hath perfected praiſe*. If you feare God whilſt young, he will have much glory by you: when it ſhall be ſaid there's a young child, one that is but ten years old, yet he prayeth, and he has given himſelf up to Jeſus Chriſt; he feareth God and dares not ſin againſt him O this is much for the glory of God.

Conſider. 2. *The opportunities which the Living have to ſerve and glorifie God, will all be gone within a little while, never to be enjoyed again any more,*

It is but a very ſhort time that you or I ſhall be able to do any thing or ſpeak any thing for God in this world: When Life goes then all opportunities to ſerve and glorifie God in this world goe with it, (as has been abundantly declared). *The grave cannot praiſe him, death cannot celebrate him.* Therefore we had need be laying our ſelvs out now for God: e're long we ſhall not be able to do it, tho we would never ſo feign. *Night cometh when no man can work Joh.* 9. 4. There's a Night of death coming apace: Thou art going into a dark grave, into a Land of darkneſs where the Light it ſelf is darkneſs, there will be no working there. All opportunities will then not only be gone, but irrecoverably gone. For when once a man is dead, he ſhall never live again any

any more in this world as formerly. When he lyes down in the grave he shall not rise until the Heavens be no more. *The eye that hath seen him shall see him no more.* And it will not be long before death comes: We are now among the living, shortly we shall all be among the dead *Job.* 16. 22. *When a few dayes are come then shall I goe the way whence I shall not return.* Suppose the utmost that can be supposed that any of us should live a 100 years in this world (not one in a hundred, in a thousand, in a million of men that attains unto such an age) yet what's that to eternity which draws on apace; Nor can any man tell how soon his life and all his opportunities to be doing good will be gone. We read what *Isaac* said *Gen.* 27. 2. *I know not the day of my death.* So may every one of us say we are not (as *Hezekiah* was) sure we shall live fifteen years longer: It may be thou shalt not live fifteen weeks, It may be not fifteen dayes, it may be not one day: especially if men lot upon a long time, that's a sign they must down into the pit quickly, where they cannot hope for life or mercy any more. We read of one in the Scripture that dreamed of living a long life and a merry, but God said to him ---- *this night shall thy soul be required of thee. Luk.* 12. 20.

Consider. 3. *That they whose opportunities to glorifie*

glorifie God are gone; doe or will wish that they had improved them better.

Where is there a good man in the world but when he looks back and considers the opportunities which he has had, he is grieved that he has improved them no more for God: Take the man that hath done most for God in the world, and he wisheth that he had done much more for him, and is sorry at his heart that he hath done so little for God and for Jesus Christ. Nor is it to be doubted but the blessed Souls which are now in Heaven, wish that they had done more for God whilst they were living on the earth: if there be any sorrow amongst the Saints in glory, this is it: were they capable of mourning they would morn for this, that they brought no more glory to the Name of God whilst they had opportunities and advantages thereunto. And as for damned souls which are gone down into the pit of darkness forever, and can no more hope for an opportunity to be active in promoting the glory of God, how doe they wish (but in vain) that they had taken hold of their opportunities when they did enjoy them! Because they neglected to serve God whilst they lived, when they die, they lye down in desperate sorrow. There is nothing doth fill the soul of a forlorn

damned

demned creature more with infinite and endless Anguish, then the dismal remembrance of lost opportunities. When a sinner at the great day shall behold others whom he knew in this world, sitting in the Kingdom of glory, and see himself shut out forevermore, and then shall think, if I whilst living had glorifyed God as they did, I should have had the same glory which they now have, but because instead of serving God I served the world and the lusts of it, until my opportunities were all gone; I am therefore become justly miserable throughout all the dayes of eternity what insupportable anguish will everlastingly take hold on him!

Consider. 4. *We must all give an account concerning our improvement of the opportunities which we have here enjoyed to serve and glorifie God.*

Thus in the parable concerning the unjust Steward, it was said to him *Give an account of thy Stewardship for thou must be no longer steward, Luk.* 16. 2. Every man is a steward: there are many mercies which he is entrusted with, that so he might improve them to the honour of the God and giver of them: And (tho there be but few men that think of it as they should do,) the day is coming and hastning upon him, when he must give a strict account concerning all those mercies whether he did honour God with them or no. The Lord has given to every man some

work

work or other to doe for him in the world *Mar.* 13. 34. And an account must be given whether that work has bin done, and how it has bin done O what a case are they in, that death cometh upon them and their work not done! when life is gone, and the mans soul is gone before GOD the Judge of all to give an account, but he hath done nothing of that work which the Lord required him to attend! It had bin good for that man that he had never bin born. The Lord giveth to every man a Talent to be trading with, as in the Parable concerning the *Talents* is expressed; yea more Talents then one which he must account for: Life is a great Talent, and Health is a precious Talent. And if God hath blessed any of you with an estate in the world, that's a Talent for which you must be accountable how you have improved it for God. And what will men say to the Son of God, when their own consciences shall accuse them, and say *you whilst living in the world, if called upon to doe good and glorifie God with your estates; pretended you had nothing to give, not a shilling to releive a poor servant of Christ, or to promote any pious worke whereby God would be glorified; yet at the same time you could lavish upon your Idols, you had enough to spend upon your Lusts, to nourish pride and sensuality, but could find nothing for God.* What will such say for themselves in the day of the Lords pleading with them? yea believe it, men shall

be

be called to an account concerning all their works, words, and thoughts whilſt living in this world, whether they did act for God, and ſpeak for God, and think for God and his glory 2. *Cor.*5. 10.

Conſider. 5. *If we be duly careful to live unto Gods praiſe and glory whilſt we continue in the world, we our ſelves ſhall have the comfort of it at and after death.*

I confeſs that tho a man ſhould have nothing for his pains yet if he might be ſo happy as to promote the glorv of God in an active way, that alone is happineſs enough. No Creature is capable of an higher dignity then this is, to be made uſe of as an inſtrument of Gods glory. But moreover the Lord will be ſure richly to reward thoſe that diligently ſeek and ſerve him. I can aſſure you that the thought of a life ſpent in ſerving God, is Comfort in death. My Brethren, If I muſt tell you my own experience, and (as David ſpeaketh) *declare what God hath done for my ſoul*, it is this; When I have layn upon ſick beds, (and as I have thought on my *death-bed,*) that which has comforted and kept my ſoul alive has bin, that I could ſay *Lord remember that I have deſired to know and to doe thy will, and to glorify thy Name on the earth.* And now that I am reſtored to Life and health, and to you again, there's nothing that does trouble me more than to conſider that I have lived

ſo

ſo many (above five and fourty years) in the the world and this very day it is Twenty three year ſince I began to preach the Goſpel in this place, but have done very little for God all this while. I ſay then a life improved for God, will be Comfort in death. And O what joy will fill the ſoul of that man after death, who lived to the glory of God whilſt in this world, unto whom it ſhall be ſaid *well done good and faithful ſervant enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Yea, & the more any man has done for God the more glory ſhall he receive from God in the world to come forever. The Lord will give to every man according to his works, both as to the kind & degree of his works will the reward of eternal glory be proportioned *Rev.* 22. 12. He that ſoweth plentifully ſhall reap plentyfully.

By way of direction.

1. *Let us devote our* All *to the ſervice of God and that as long as we ſhall live.* We muſt give our ſelves, our whole ſelves intirely unto God in Jeſus Chriſt. There are two eſſential parts which every living man does conſiſt of, *viz.* an immortal ſoul and a mortal body; we are to gloriſie God with both theſe 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. *Glorifie God in your body and in your ſpirit which are God's.* Our ſouls and all the Powers and Faculties thereof ſhould be for God. We ſhould ſet our underſtandings on work to contrive for him. A man ſhould be often thinking with

himself, wherein may I yet do more for God, to declare his Name and make known his glory in the world. Our Wills should be ever choosing the things that please him: O that we had more of Christ in us who always did those things that please the father *Joh.* 8. 29. Our Affections should be given to God. *David* could say *I have set mine affection to the house of my God*, And our bodies should be devoted to him also, *Rom.* 12. 1. *Present your bodyes a living sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*. Our tongues should speak for God; how much glory may a gracious tongue bring unto God: One good exhortation occasionally administred may be a means of converting a soul. Our hands should act for him, all that we are and all that we have should be for God: Our Estates should be improved for him; God has a Right in every mans estate; and the scripture saith *honour God with thy substance Prov.* 3. 10. If men had hearts & grace they might be instrumental to promote the honour of God by their outward estates: you know not how soon they may be taken from you by one providence or other; if it should be so, incase you can say Whilst I had an estate, I did good & honoured God with it, you may bear your losses with a great deal of Comfort; But when Conscience shall say to a man, Thou didst withhold more than was meet, therefore the Lord has blasted thy

thy eſtate; thoſe are ſad loſſes indeed: To be ſure er'e long you will be removed from all things here below; and then you can honour God with your eſtates no more. And as long as we live let us be thus for God. Let us take up *Davids* reſolution who ſaid *While I live I will praiſe the Lord, I will ſing praiſes to my God while I have any being Pſa.* 146. 2. And *Hezekiah* after his recovery from ſickneſs had the ſame holy reſolve in his heart *Iſaiah* 38. 20. *The Lord was ready to ſave me: therefore we will ſing my ſongs to the ſtringed inſtruments all the days of our life* ——.

2. *Let us aime at God's glory in every thing.*

We ſhould aime at that eſpecially in religious actions, ſuch as hearing the Word, Prayer in publick, private, ſecret, holy Conferences, reading the ſcriptures &c. Alſo in civil actions; men ſhould attend the works of their civil Callings as acts of obedience unto God. It was an evidence of a godly heart in a poor Husbandman who being imployed in cutting wood, one asking him what he was doing, he reply'd *Iam cutting wood for God*: He followed the work of his particular, civil Calling out of obedience to God, & with reſpect to his will and glory. HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD ſhould be written on the horſe bridles, and upon every Pot in *Jeruſalem*, *Zech.* 14. 20,21. You ſhould buy and ſell and build houſes and ſhips, and all with ſome reſpect to the glory of God. When a man awakes in

the morning let his firſt thoughts be, *What ſhall I doe for God this day?* Yea in natural actions we ſhould have our eyes upon God, and reſpect his glory: in our eating, and drinking, and ſleeping we ought to doe thus. There is a Scripture, which I wiſh it may come into my thoughts a hundred times every day as long as I am to live in this world: the ſcripture which I mean is that 1. *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether you eat or drink, or whatſoever ye doe, doe all to the glory of God.* If we remember this, God will accept of all that we doe as a glorifying of his Name; and then the longer we live, the more glory ſhall we bring to the Name of God: and we ſhall every day be adding to our own Crown of glory which is reſerved in Heaven for us. The Lord grant that *the living the living* may improve Life and the advantages of it unto the Praiſe of God Moſt High; as we have been exhorted this day in his NAME.

Tibi Domine.

Erratum.

Page 66. line 21. for *Chriſtians* read *Corinthians.*

A SERMON

WHEREIN IS SHEWED

That it is the *DUTY* and should be the *CARE* of *Believers* on *CHRIST*, to Live in the Constant Exercise of *GRACE*.

By Mr. *NATHANAEL MATHER* Pastor of a Church at *Dublin* in *Ireland*.

Joh. 8. 29. —— *I doe always those things that please him.*

Rom. 8. 14. *As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

Ephes. 4. 30. *Grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

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Believers on Christ ought to live in a Constant Exercise of Grace.

Gal. 5. 25.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

IN the former part of this Epistle the Apostle hath been confuting that Corrupt and destructive Doctrine which some false teachers had been sowing among the *Galatians* and wherewith they were many of them deeply infected. The Corrupt doctrine which he confutes is this, that Believers were both obliged to, and justified by the works of the Law, particularly by observing the Ceremonial Law. Having at large Confuted this pernicious Error in this Chapter, he first exhorts them to stand fast in that Evangelical Liberty that Christ had made them free withal *ver.* 1. which he presseth from the momentousness, of it *Christ else would profit them nothing*;

they would be obliged to the keeping of the whole Law, Christ would be of no effect to them, and they would else fall from Grace. In the next place he directs them what course to take to prevent the further spreading of this so dangerous a Contagion, *namely* to cut off the pertinacious preachers of this damnable doctrine; and he first laid down a general principle which he elsewhere makes use of on the like Occasion, See 1. *Cor.* 5. 6. 'Tis a proverbial & Metaphorical speech that they were all in danger of being infected, unless such were *Cut off*, A Sin or Errour in a Church easily Catcheth and spreadeth, because the Members are all members one of another, as *Rom.* 12. or all of the same Lump, that there is a spiritual union, nearness, and Conjunction between them by Virtue of the Institution of Christ; and thence if they do not purge out such corrupt Leaven, the Defilement is easily diffused with great Celerity and Efficacy over the whole lump. Next he insinuates himself by professing his confident perswasion and hope that they would readily be of the same mind with him & put in Practice this his direction *ver.* 10. to give impartial Judgment upon all that troubled them: So the Apostle calls the proceeding of the Church in order to Censure 1. *Cor.* 5. 12. adding *ver.* 11. that himself for the contrary Doctrine to this, (whereby they were troubled, and wherewith they had been

been infected) ſuffered perſecution; thereby intimating that it was not too heavy a Judgment that they who troubled them with this new goſpel, ſhould ſuffer Excomunication; For either he muſt have bin utterly out in all his ſufferings of perſecutions, yea & in his perſiſting in preaching otherwiſe, tho' multitudes ſtumbled at the Goſpel thereby; or elſe all theſe corrupt teachers deſerved well to be cut off, who preached a way of Salvation contrary to what he had both ſuffered for the Preaching of; yea and (which was more) given great offence by preaching. Having thus made his way, he tells them *ver.* 12. what he would have done with thoſe that unſetled them in their former orderly walking and believing and profeſſing, even that they ſhould be cut off. But leſt any ſhould ſay, why do you thus write unto us? what have we to do to cut them off? he adds *ver.* 13. that God had called them to Liberty, *that is* God had called and brought them into ſuch an eſtate by the Goſpel, wherein they had a liberty of acting according to their place, in and for the cutting off of thoſe that troubled them. Not that private members may caſt out their Teachers by any Office-Authority over them, but that they have an intereſt of liberty and priviledge to act in obedience to Chriſt and in obedience to their Officers that are found 2. *Cor.* 10. 6. in a way of paſſing a free & conſciencious

Judgment on such as are unsound so as to reject them. But because Churches are too apt in the use of this their liberty to fall into abusing of it, he presently gives a needful warning and caution *viz.* that they used not this their liberty as an occasion to the flesh *i. e.* Take heed not to act and vent their own corruptions, by and in the using of this their liberty: But Churches being so exceeding subject to misuse their liberty, he contents not himself with giving that Caution, But further adds directions to be observed by them, that they may not fall to the abuse of this their Liberty.

Direct. 1. *Serve one another by love* ver. 13. backed with two arguments,

1. From the large and happy Influence of so doing, all the Law is fulfilled thereby *ver.* 14. It would lead them on to the doing of all the duties required in the Law, wherein he secretly girds at those that would have brought them under the Law again. *q. d.* If you would needs be under the Law, here's an excellent way of being under it to Christ *viz.* serving one another in love.

2. From the Evils and Mischief that attended the contrary practice, *ver.* 15.

Direct. 2. Is ver. 2. *Walk in the Spirit.*

If you would not use your liberty as an occasion to the Flesh for the acting and venting of corruption, then *walk in the spirit*, i. e. *in the exercise*

exercise of Grace. This direction the Apostle backs with a four fold argument.

Argum. 1. So doing *ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh*. which he proves from the Contrariety between the flesh and the Spirit *ver.* 17.

Arg. 2. So doing it will appear that *ye are not under the Law ver.* 18. (being led by the spirit and walking in the spirit are all one in sense) *i. e.* not under the Law to be condemned by it. This the Apostle makes out, & withall explains what he means by the lusts of the Flesh and the fruits of the Spirit, *ver.* 19, to 24. Of the lusts of the flesh, he saith that they are manifest, that they shut out from inheriting the Kingdom of God; and most of those that he names are such as people are most apt to fall into in the use of their foresaid Church-liberty *ver.* 20, 21. the fruits of the spirit that he instanceth in are mostly such as should shine out in Churches using their liberty, and against such he sayes there is no law that shall condemn them, they are not under the condemning power of the Law. Perhaps also the Apostle had his eye on the Circumcision, and Mosaical days and Rites mention'd *Chapt.* 4. which the false Teachers said were of such Necessity, that there was a Law against those that observed them not, therefore saith the Apostle, if you will tye Christians up thus, there are things which, it's past

past all question *there is no law against* therefore look to these.

3 A third Argument why they should walk in the Spirit, is because they had crucifyed the the Flesh with the lusts and affections thereof *ver.* 24. and 'tis a very uncomly and incongrous thing for Saints to be led by a crucified thing, and if they be not led by the Spirit, they must and should be led by the flesh.

4 A fourth Argument for their walking in the Spirit is, because they were alive in or by the Spirit *ver.* 25.

Direct. 3. A third Direction that the Apostle gives how Saints may eschew the abusing of their Liberty is that they *should not be desirous of vain glory ver.* 26. if we be, we shall abuse our liberty as an occasion to the flesh, and use it in such a way as may be a provoking to one another; this desire of vain glory will put us upon envying one another.

Direct. 4. The fourth Direction is *Chapt.* 6. *ver.* 1. & the design of it is to teach Christians in the use of their Liberty to make a difference between the miscariages of men. There are some that are not Censurable Crimes but lesser faults things that do not unavoydably overthrow the Saving fundamental truth which the Church professeth, nor yet the comfortable walking of the Church together in all the ordinances & worship of the Gospel, and there are some persons who

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tho perhaps through weakneſs they may be by ſurprizal entangled and catch'd in ſome carnal and ungoſpel-like Opinion or practice, yet they are not obſtinate or incurable therein. To ſuch, and in ſuch caſes, you muſt walk otherwiſe, if you would uſe your liberty and that power which Members have mutually one over another aright. Theſe you muſt not preſently *cut off* but you that are ſpiritual muſt with a ſpirit of meekneſs labour the Reſtoring of them: thus bearing one anothers burthens, and thus fulfilling ſ Law of Chriſt as he is the Law-giver of his Church, & hath given them Laws & rules how to carry towards all ſorts of offences and offenders in his Churches. *Moral duties* are the Commandments or Laws of God; but Church Rules and ordinances of meer *Inſtitution* are properly the Lawes of Chriſt, as he is the Head and King and Law-giver of his Church.

5. To theſe the Apoſtle adds a

Fifth Direction. Chapt. 6. 6. becauſe he had allowed them a liberty in *Cutting off* thoſe falſe Brethren and Corrupt Teachers that were brought in among them *Chapt.* 5. 12. Leſt they ſhould think themſelves at liberty to ſlight and weary out their ſound Teachers, the Apoſtle adds a direction touching their *Maintenance*, which is part of the honour and eſteem they ought to have for their *Inſtructors*. But becauſe people are apt to look on it as a matter of Li-

Liberty and not of bounden duty, at leaſt as to the meaſure of it, and thence to deal fraudulently; the Holy Ghoſt backs it with a ſolemn Caution, telling them that they had to doe with God in this matter, and not with Poor weak contemptible men whom they could wrong at pleaſure: Alſo with a weighty argument that the Lords diſpenſing of his Grace and ſpiritual bleſſings by Miniſters teaching, uſually holds a proportion with peoples dealing with them in Carnal good things: their ſouls would thrive leſs or more, as they dealt with God in this matter of Communicating to his Miniſters. This is the ſcope of *ver.* 7. 8. And laſtly upon this occaſion of Communicating to their Teachers he adds a brief exhortation to perſeverance in well doing in the General *ver.* 9. and to enlarging their beneficence to others alſo *ver.* 10. This is the *Analyſis* and brief veiw of this latter part of this Epiſtle; which I confeſs I have the more inſiſted on, becauſe it is not ſo generally obſerved.

The Text falls under *the ſecond Direction* how Chriſtians may avoid uſing their Liberty as an occaſion to the Feſh, laid down *ver.* 16. and this verſe contains the fourth Argument that the Apoſtle preſſeth that duty of walking in the Spirit withal *viz.* becauſe they are *alive by the Spirit* or live in the Spirit as we tranſlate it.

Queſt.

Queſt. 1. *What is here meant by the Spirit?*

Anſw. *Spirit*, in this Chapter is oppoſed to the *Fleſh*: And hence as *Fleſh* is the principle of Coruption; So ſpirit is the principle of Grace. That divine Principle in the hearts of Saints, which is the ſpring and root of all new Obedience and holy actings in a Saints walk. And it is called the *Spirit*, as for other reaſons, ſo becauſe it is the proper inſeparable Effects of the Holy Spirit dwelling in a believer. And he is ſaid to live in and by the Spirit, becauſe by this principle of Grace in his heart, he is ſpiritually alive who by nature was dead *i. e.* alive to God, as *Rom.* 6. 11. Here is alſo an oppoſition between the life or living of this principle, and the death or crucifying of the fleſh, *ver.* 24. which is the principle contrary to it *q. d.* Original ſin is crucifyed and therefore you are not alive in and unto ſin, but you are alive by the ſpirit, the Spirit of God dwelling in you hath quickned you to new obedience, or made you alive by creating a principle of Grace in your hearts, and this principle being not crucified (as ſin is) but alive in us, we ought to walk in it.

Queſt. 2. *What is meant by walking in the Spirit?*

Anſw. Walking relates to all a Chriſtians wayes and Actions. The Greek phraſe here

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used is a military word, used of Souldiers being set and marching in *rank and file* orderly, every one keeping his place: so that it extends to all the Acts of a Christians life. And these must be in the Spirit, that is in the exercise of his spiritual gracious principles. That this is the sense of the phrase, appears from the like manner of speech used by the Apostle concerning a Believer in his state of Unregeneracy, see *Col.* 3. 7. His former state was to be alive in his lusts opposed to his being now dead through Christ as to the life spoken of before *ver.* 3. and his former practice was a walking in these lusts, *i. e.* a practising, acting, & fulfilling of them, a walking in the acting and exercise of them.

The *Doctrine* then to be insisted on, is

That *'Tis the duty, and should be the care of a Christian to walk in the constant exercise of Grace. i. e. In the acting of those gracious principles that he received in his Regeneration.*

See *ver.* 16. This is that *Living to the Lord* that is required in the 2. *Cor.* 5. 15. See *Gal.* 2. 19. And indeed a Christian cannot be said to live any longer than he acts Grace: For tho he may have life in him, yet 'tis no act of life that is of his spiritual life except Grace be acted in it. As 'tis no Action of natural life that proceeds not from the union of soul and body together

together and their mutual claſping on each other ſo 'tis no act of ſpiritual life that proceeds not from the ſouls union with God and claſping about him in Chriſt Jeſus.

Queſt. *What Grace muſt a Chriſtian walk in the exercise of?*

Anſw. 1. The General Graces of a Chriſtian that are never out of ſeaſon nor ever unſuitable, what ever the caſe and condition of a perſon be, *e. g.* Faith, Fear, Thankfulneſs, and Love; Heavenly-mindedneſs, Watchfulneſs, &c.

Faith, For (*Heb.* 11. 6.) fetching ſpiritual ſtrength from Chriſt, and looking up to him for Acceptance in all.

Fear, Prov. 23. 17. that is, An awful regard to the Authority and will of God, as his rule ſubjecting himſelf to it 1. *Pet.* 4. 2. Putting a reſpect of obedience to God on all he doeth, *Col.* 3. 17. *doing all things in the name of the Lord.*

Thankfulneſs and *Love* and *Joy* Putting a reſpect of Thankfulneſs upon all his obedience, as well as of obedience upon every action *Col.* 3. 12. And from Love and Thankfulneſs deſigning in every thing the Glorifying of God, 1. *Cor.* 10. 31.

Heavenly-mindedneſs, *Col.* 3. 1. 2. Seeking and ſetting our affections on things above, and

an heart working Heaven-ward, designing going to Heaven in all he hath, and laying hold on Eternal Life.

Watchfulness, See 1. *Pet.* 5. 8. *Luk.* 21. 34, 36. *Ephes.* 5. 14, 15. *Heb.* 3. 12.

2 Those particular Graces, that a mans Relation, Employment, or Gods providence calls for.

Those which a mans Relation calls for. For the Grace which the relation of a wife calls for 1. Pet. 3. 2. So for servants *Ephes.* 6. 5.

Those which a mans present Condition and Employment calls for. If it be worshiping of God *Heb.* 12. 28. *Psa.* 5. 7. If it be restoring a Brother overtaken with a fault, then exercise and shew forth a spirit of meekness *Gal.* 6. 1.

Those which God's present Providence calleth for, both particular and General, Inward and outward: When God afflicts we must put on humbleness and mourning as our garment and Constant attire in such a day, 1. *Pet.* 5. 5, 6. If God favour, then beautyful garments or garments of praise must be worn, *Isa.* 52. 1. & 61. 3.

For the Reasons of this Doctrine, I shall goe no further then this Discourse of the Apostle in this Chapter,

Reas. 1. *It will prevent your using your Liberty as an occasion to the Flesh, and fulfilling the Lusts*

Lusts of it. Of this there is great danger, we are very apt to it, Corruption is even present and active to get the Start of Grace, and be before hand with it if we take not heed; Yet this is a great Evil, thus to abuse God's Favour and our mercies. To prevent it, there is no way like this of a mans walking in the exercise of it Continually.

Thus 'tis in their allowed delights and Creature enjoyments, and also in liberty given by the providence of God from subjection to others, from Temptations, from Afflictions: And in liberty given by the Institution and order of Christ in Church matters. and also Spiritual Liberty given by the Grace of God.

You shall not fulfil the Lusts of the Flesh. See *ver*. 16. Flagging in the Exercise of Grace and leting it fall, exposeth to the prevailing of Temptations and Corruptions which hence come easily to grow up and get head over us: Hence they not only stir within and sollicite, but Lead us Captive and prevail over us. If *David*, *Noah*, *Lot*, *Peter* had kept up the Exercise of Grace, they had not Fallen as they did. The Apostle makes this out, from the Contrariety between Grace and Sin, *ver*. 17. which is such that the exercise of one, keeps down the other: And lusts will mingle themselves in all we doe, if we walk not in the Ex-

Exercise of Grace, then all we doe will become sin: and so be put among our sins for pardon, not our Obedience for Acceptance.

Every thing we doe is a fruit of the Spirit or the flesh, and if Grace be not exercised 'tis then a fruit of the Flesh, not the Spirit, *Joh.* 3. 6.

Thus men come to fulfil the lusts of the Flesh, when they are doing duties that God calls for; Hence in mens callings, many men are but fulfilling the lust of covetousness and Love of the world.

And in duties of worship, men thus come to be fulfilling a lust of pride and of Hypocrisie, yea of contempt of God, because not worshiping Him in faith, from Love and with Fear, they either look for Acceptance in it without regard to Christ; or else heed not whether they be accepted of God or not.

Reas. 2. *This will clear it up that you are not under the Law but under Grace.* See *ver.* 18. It will clear it up to others: for hereby Grace will shine out in you, and you will shew the Vertues of Christ who hath called you. So *Paul* of the Churches of *Macedonia* 2. *Cor.* 8. 12. and of the *Thessalonians*, 1 Epist. 1. *Chapt.* 3, & 4. *ver.* from their works of Faith and Labour of Love Concludeth their Election.

It

It will clear it up to your selves in your own Consciences 1. *Joh.* 3. 14, 18, 19. For thus to be lead in the Spirit is a certain sign of it, because the Law gives not the Spirit, *Gal.* 3. 2.

He whose state is to be under the Old Covenant hath not Grace, and therefore cannot exercise any, therefore if a man exercise Grace 'tis a certain Argument that he is in a New Covenant estate. *Exercising Grace* will Clear up your State, because Grace by Acting grows more and brighter, and thence more discernable. And because in this way the Spirit of God, the spirit of consolation, will reveal your State to you, enable you todiscern it clearly and judge of it certainly to your Comfort. Thus God dealt with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 22. 12, 15. *Now I know thou fearest me* ---. And the Lord again reneweth his Covenant with him, and Confirms it with his Oath, for tho he made it before and gave him also a Seal of it, *Circumcision*; Yet I find not that the Lord Ratified it by his Oath till now. And observe it, that it is not the outward Act of Obedience that yeildeth peace and Assurance, or on which Conscience can give a Testimony of a mans good estate, (for there is no outward Act but a Hypocrite may doe it, 1. *Cor.* 13. 1, 2, 3, 4.) but it is from the Exercise of grace in that Action, that in Simplicity and in Godly Since-

Sincerity a man hath done it, as 2. *Cor.* 1. 12. or that it was done to the Lord, or before the Lord, as *David* speaks 2. *Sam.* 6. 21. *And David said to Michal, It was before the Lord &c.* For our joy in every thing we doe, comes in by such a tryal of our own acting, as no other but wee our selves can be able to make thereof *Gal.* 6. 4. *But let every man prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoycing in himself alone, and not in another.* And *against such as so walk there is no Law* that can cast and condemn them. For such hath one in Heaven that have satisfied the Law for all their breaches of it. Hence exercising Grace is the only way to have the Comfort of Grace.

Real. 3. *The flesh is Crucified with the affections and Lusts thereof* ver. 24.

Not only the principle of sin but all the inward Stirrings of it; whether blown up by Satan or rising up from the secret lustings of sin it self (so I think signifie the two words which the Apostle here useth) have received their death's wound; and thence are (tho not quite dead, yet) in a languishing dying Condition, and sure to dye as one nayled to a Crosse is, tho he be not yet dead. Yea this by virtue of Christs death and your Communion with him therein, for that the Apostle aimes at, and hath his eye on in this expression that the Flesh

is

is Crucified. The flesh being crucified it hath less power to stop and hinder the inward actings of Grace, and its prevayling to Carry you on in the ways thereof. It was at first crucified for this end, and is kept Crucified upon the Cross of Christ under the hand of his Spirit and killing power of his death, for this end that you might walk in the Spirit being set at Liberty from the prevailing dominion and strength of it.

Besides, If you be Christ's you have Crucified the flesh, you yourselves have been active in, applying the death of Christ to that end and fetching virtue from it for the killing of sin in your hearts. And therefore not walking in the Spirit, is a retracting what you have done in this kind, and an undoing of it inasmuch as 'tis a yeilding and giving way to the flesh to live again and Act you again.

Reas. 4. *You are alive by the Spirit*: You have grace and that not from yourselves but from the Spirit. You have grace? This is given for Exercise: that it should be drawn forth, and fill your lives and all your actions *Eph.* 2. 10. Grace unless exercised is so far lost: Its use lies in its being used, as it is of all other things. 'Tis below your priviledge and blessed estate not to *walk in the Spirit*; If others doe not that are not alive in the Spirit

'tis

tis but like themselves, but for you 'tis unsuitable & most incongruous. This Grace is from and by the Spirit, both first and still maintained. Thankfulness to him obligeth to walk in the Spirit, which is indeed to His praise and Glory.

USE. 1. For Information.

A Great part of a Christians work lyes out of other mens sight. Indeed the greatest part of it is bosome work; both his watch and his work ly chiefly there where No body else sees. His Exercises are most about such things, Especially the more grown Christian that he is. And he whose great business lyes without doors is either unsound or very low in growth, Even but a Babe in Christ and in Grace.

Informat. 2. *A true Christians life is no idle Life but a busie one.* Especially if a Christian *indeed*; and in any measure serious and sensible: Yea when Grace is gotten and cleared too, that a man sees he hath it, and so his Assurance is setled, yet there he hath his hands full of work, even to see that he fill up his time with Dutyes, and his Dutyes with Grace; for both these are included in *walking in the Spirit*.

Inform. 3. *A Christian should doe nothing wherein Grace cannot be exercised.*

For

For tis his indispensible duty to act Grace in every step of his Walk, therefore he may take no step wherein Grace cannot be exercised. This Rule if attended would afford Direction in many passages that fall before us in this World; Especially such Things as appear not flatly Evil in the Matter and Nature of them.

If there be any thing wherein you cannot exercise grace, doe it not. True, the Rule holds not always affirmatively, that whatever a Christian may Possibly exercise grace in, is therefore Lawful for him. A Godly *Israelite* might possibly Exercise Grace in being present at Sacrifices offered in the High places. *Solomon* it seems did so and therefore the Lord overlooked the failing and accepted his sincerity. And so (I doubt not) many souls have in keeping *Holy-days* of mens devising, and not of God's appointing or approving. And also in Worshiping God after such modes and Forms as the Lord alloweth not: Especially in former dayes when less Light in these matters was broken out. But it follows not that these things are therefore Lawful because some have exercised Grace therein: Yet the rule holds Negatively, That wherein grace cannot be exercised is not lawful. It is in special useful in things indifferent; As for Example; *In Attire* and *dressing*

dressing; If you cannot exercise grace in this and thus *tricking up* yourselves, or spending so much time in it, tis then unlawful for you. So in going into Company, and sitting with them, Especially in Publick houses, *Taverns*, *Coffee houses* &c. Can you exercise grace in so doing? Canst put a respect of obedience to God, yea of love and Thankfulness on it? Canst thou maintain an Awe of him upon thy heart? or does it not rather ever bring a secret difilement on thy spirit? If so, tis then unlawful for thee. And indeed, the Rule is general, and holds Concerning all Recreations, Divertisements, and universally all Indifferent things, If you cannot exercise grace in them, tho through your own Infirmity, and much more if it be from the Nature or inseparable Circumstances of the things themselves, they become unlawful unto thee.

USE. 2. For *Examination*.

Have you walked in the Spirit? Yea, have you minded it in all the Steps of your walk? or onely minded your keeping your Way, and walking on without regarding whether in the Spirit or no, what grace you acted in every thing. Indeed it is not enough to act some grace in a duty, but you should fill up the duty with grace. *e. g.* Some dutyes are wider than others; a day of Humiliation than an ordinary

ordinary every day's prayer, & therefore should have more of Godly Sorrow and holy fear acted in it: Hence rending the heart *Joel.* 2. 13. and calling Terrours round about us is the duty of such a day *Sam.* 2. 22. to beset and besiege our own souls therewith. So in Sacraments, *Faith* should be acted at an higher rate than is always required in hearing the word, because there's a most solemn sealing Transaction between God and us: and because God in these deals with us by the most affecting senses. Hence they are Dutyes, and hence require more enlarged actings of Faith. Examine whether you have acted Grace proportionably in all your dutyes.

1. *First-Table duties*: Prayer, Hearing, keeping Sabbaths, recieving Sacraments: If no Grace be excercised in these, they have bin utterly lost, God's Name taken in vain, and hence they will never yeild thee any Comfort.

2. *Second-Table duties*: what grace is exercised in these? Your Calling, your duties to Relations, your occasional dutyes and Converses *Col.* 4. 6. *Alwais with grace seasoned with salt.* Visits *Mat.* 25. 40. & 10. 40, 41, 42. *Rom.* 1. 11. & 16. 16. That Scripture forbids not only lacivious & dissembling kisses, but requires that in them God's glory be aim'd at: For as his holiness is his preserving his own glory in every thing; So our holyness is our being & acting like him therin *Joh.* 3. 6.

Duties

Duties of Civility must have something worthy of God in them See *Ruth.* 2. 4. how their Salutations savour of God and Grace: verily this Rule extendeth even to these. Nay more, to Church Transactions, your debates and votes there and all your use of the liberty whereto the Lord hath called you, ought to be filled up with exercise of grace. And indeed it is the want of this, that makes Church-Members so often warp from the rule, and act the unsavory pangs and and distempers of their own spirits.

3. *Your refraining and forbearing from Sin.*

See *Nehem.* 5. 15. Else your very forbearing sin is look'd upon but as sin, while tis not from grace. For (as before was partly Intimated) tis of the Flesh and therefore is Flesh, *Joh.* 3. 6. As a man may possibly in Holy Dutyes act from Corruption, as the Pharisees did *Matth.* 23 14. So many a man from Lust forbears sin, *e. g.* from Pride, from Covetousness, from base Fear of men &c.

USE. 3 *Humiliation for failings herein.*

Christ calls upon *Sardis* Rev. 3. 2, 3. because he had not found their works filled up with the Exercise of grace before God: Before men they seemed beautiful and glorious, but there was a secret emptiness and deadness in them before

the Lord. And for this he threatned them if they repented not to come on them as a Thief in the Night, in an hour when they knew not *i. e.* when they least looked for it, were least provided for, and in worst case to bear it, and with all Circumstances of Aggravation and Terrour: This the Spirit sayth to the Church.

There is no sin but we should be humbled for it when minded of it in the Word; much more such an one as this, which argues grace is very low and *ready to die*, as tis there sayd to *Sardis* And tis a sin of frequent Incursion. a sin that we sin often every day, and therefore should be the more humbled for. Though we are apt to make light of such sins, yet the Spirit of God does not, Christ doth not make light of it to that Church. Other sins that we seldom and hardly fall into, we think it our duty to humble our selves for: But this, and such as this doe us as much hurt, and usually more then such as affect us more with Sorrow and shame. If it seem to want any thing of weight and hainousness; yet the Frequency of it makes it up, and more then up. We must *remember and loathe our selves for our doings that are not good*, but empty of grace, as well as for those that are Abominations because of the Evil of the matter of them, *Ezek.* 36. 31.

Consider two things to help to affect our hearts

hearts with ſhame and ſorrow for not exerciſing grace in every ſtep of our walk.

1. Hereby we break with God and looſe our Communion with him: Not our ſtate of Communion but the actual exerciſe and enjoyment of it. If a man ſhould fourty or a 100 times every day looſe the exerciſe of his Reaſon tho but for half a quarter of an hour or leſs, tho' he ſhould not looſe the Faculty it ſelf, how ſad would you account it! much more is this to be lamented, becauſe hereby we looſe our Communion with God, ſo far and ſo long as we do not *walk in the Spirit.* And Communion with him is as much more precious then the uſe of reaſon, as Divine & ſpiritual life is more excellent than the life of Reaſon. In whatever we ceaſe to exerciſe grace, we do therein turn off from God and break with him, and were it not for Chriſt and His Mediation we were Loſt forever.

2. Whatever we do without Exerciſing grace in it, favours not to God's taſt it finds no acceptance with him, *Cant.* 4. 16. unleſs the ſpices of our graces flow out, none of our fruit is pleaſant to Chriſt's Taſt, and if not pleaſant to his taſt he Preſents it not to God for his acceptance: Hence nothing wherein no grace is Exerciſed is put on our account for a reward, but only amongſt our ſins for pardon or for puniſhment: hence if no grace be exerciſed, our

Salvation

Salvation is not at all furthered thereby. And how ſad is it for a man that hath a Race to run, and work of life and death to get done; to Nod, and ſtand, and ſleep, and fall ſo often in a day!

USE. 4. of Exhortation,

Walk in the Spirit, exerciſe grace in every Step you take.

Look to it, not only that you doe what is good, but alſo that in doing of it you act the inward principle of Grace that you have recieved.

Here Conſider.

1. *You have acted Corruption in all your ways*, Col. 3. 2. Let the time paſt ſuffice us, 1. *Pet*, 4. and from very ſhame and indignation at yourſelvs for your acting of Corruption, be provoked to walk in the Spirit for the time to come: For you are much indebted to Chriſt, you have had much forgiven and therefore ſhould love much.

2. *You muſt unavoidably in every thing, act Grace or Corruption.*

Therefore if you act not Grace, you will act Corruption. Theſe two are the Univerſal principles of all our Actions, and doe Flow into every thing we doe: They are ſeated ſo near together, and are ſo Contrary one to the other, perpetually warring each againſt other, that if one give back never ſo little, the other will be ſure immediately to come on, And

And indeed theſe two contrary principles ſhall and muſt lodge in the ſame ſoul, yea abide in the very ſame faculty during this life but the Conqueſt of the one over the other lyes in the ones prevayling more then the other to fill up your Actings. Theſe two, fleſh and Spirit, Corruption and Grace, divide between them all our Actions whatever, there being no *medium*, any more then there is any Action that hath no Rule or Law over it: As there will be either light or darkneſs in the Air; So there will be either Sin or Grace, Fleſh or Spirit filling every Action that is humane, that falls under the Command of the Will.

3. *By the* Exerciſe of Grace *the ſoul is kept in an Holy Healthfull and Chearfull frame.*

Luſts warr againſt the ſoul, 1. *Pet.* 2. 11. and thence the prevayling of them tends to the death of the ſoul. Grace warrs for the ſoul, and the acting thereof is the ſouls ſtrength and health and life. Act grace in one paſſage, and you will come off from it with the heart in frame and fitted by it for another. Grace acted in our Callings, fits the heart for dutyes of worſhip, and in dutyes of worſhip fits the heart for the dutyes of our Calling: Yea, by this meanes the heart will be kept fitt for every Change and cannot be found unprepared. *Lamps burning*, and *Loyns girt* is nothing elſe but grace in actual exerciſe: This alſo puts and keeps the ſoul in a

cheerful

cheerful and comfortable frame. There is comfort and ſweetneſs in the exerciſe of any grace, *Phil.* 2. 1. *Comfort in love.* For in the exerciſe of grace the ſoul draws near to God, and hath Fellowſhip with him who is the Fountain of bliſs and Comfort. And hence 'tis that your dutyes and wayes are ſo empty of Comfort, yea indeed nothing but ſecret bitterneſs in reflecting on them, becauſe there is no grace exerciſed in them. Thus 'tis with us in our walking and Callings, we come off from them with a ſecret ſting or trouble on our conſciences, tis becauſe grace was not exerciſed in them. And thus tis in the moſt ſweet and Comfortable dutyes, Receiving the Sacrament, praiſing God &c. if Grace is not Exerciſed in them, if they are not performed *in the Spirit* they yeild no Comfort neither afterwards, neither are they ſweet in the doing. On the other hand, Duties that ſeem to be bitter in their proper Nature, *e. g.* Repentance and breaking the heart for ſin, Confeſſing it before God, and Condemning a mans ſelf for it, even theſe duties are moſt ſweet, and yeild unſpeakable comfort if done *in the Spirit*, if grace be exerciſed in them.

4. *Thus exerciſing Grace will ſublimate and ſpiritualize every action, turning natural affections into Graces.*

Thus a mans loving his Wife or Child, or any other Relation or friend, become gracious acts, and

and his eating and drinking acts of obedience, and hence are of great account in the eyes of God, Thus, not the meaneſt ſmalleſt act, but it hath a glory and excellency in it if grace be exerciſed: as *Luther* ſaid, *a poor milk-maid milking, if done in Faith is more glorious then y Conqueſts & Triumphs of Caſar or Alexander*: And it will appear ſo another day, being recorded and regiſtred in Heaven for a gracious Acceptance and reward in the day of Chriſt. Thus a man's eating, drinking, ſleeping promotes his Salvation and adds ſomething to his Crown of Glory another day; as well as his Praying, or his Hearing, or his Suffering for CHRIST.

Tibi Domine et a te.

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This last Sermon was preached
By Mr. *Nathaneel Mather.*